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- ❖ **Gujarat Anti-Terror Bill**
- ❖ **India-Bangladesh Cultural Relations**
- ❖ **Women Empowerment & MGNREGA**
- ❖ **Women & Human Rights**
- ❖ **Human Rights of Migrant Labour**
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Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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Sustainable Development Goals

The 193 U.N. member nations on 25 September formally adopted the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and called for shared peace and prosperity. Described by the United Nations secretary-general as “a to-do list for people and planet,” The 17 SDGs, are to be implemented over the next 15 years with a big global push to win public and political support. The document, titled “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” not only outlines 17 broad goals but sets 169 specific targets. The non-binding goals succeed the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by world leaders 15 years ago. Only one of those has been achieved: halving the number of people living in extreme poverty, due primarily to economic growth in China. At least one other is close — cutting in half the proportion of people without access to clean water — and there are still three months until the goals expire. The new goals include ensuring “healthy lives” and quality education for all; clean water, sanitation and reliable modern energy, as well as making cities safe, reducing inequality within and among countries, and promoting economic growth and good governance.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon after an opening ceremony said: “They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success. For the first time ever, we have a transformative set of global goals agreed by all countries and that apply to every nation.” He further added that implementation, requiring trillions of dollars in investment, will be monitored and reviewed using a set of global indicators to be agreed by March 2016. The adoption of the SDGs has come after three years of brainstorming among member nations to draw up the comprehensive slate, but supporters say now work must start on the bigger task of implementation into practical programs, policies and parliaments. The implementation of the goals is expected to cost \$3.5 trillion to \$5 trillion every year until 2030.

Pope Francis gave his backing to the new development agenda in an address to the UN General Assembly before the summit to adopt the 17-point plan opened, calling it “an important sign of hope” at a very troubled time in the Middle East and Africa. In pursuing development, the Egyptian president El-Sissi said, the Egyptian people are facing “the most dangerous extremist terrorist ideology.” He also expressed concern that “the tools” to achieve the goals are insufficient, and stressed that richer nations have a responsibility to help poorer ones. Afghan leader Abdullah Abdullah, whose country is one of the world’s poorest, urged “political commitment and revitalized partnership” to achieve the goals. India’s Prime Minister said eliminating poverty is the top priority in his country, which has the world’s largest number of people living in extreme poverty. He confirmed plans for a fivefold boost in renewable energy but added two years to the time frame, saying it will take seven years instead of five. Supporters say the SDGs go much further by addressing root causes of issues such as poverty and looking at means as well as ends. They also are intended to be universal, not just for the developing world.

Critics say they are too broad, lack accountability and will lead to disenchantment among those most in need of hope. Supporters say there is no choice but to go big in a world of expanding population, growing inequality, dwindling resources and the existential threat from global warming. They note that while the millennium goals were developed by then secretary-general Kofi Annan and his staff, the new goals are the result of years of negotiations by all 193 member states, which means they should all have a stake in their achievement. Salil Shetty, secretary-general of Amnesty International, opines: “There is a huge gap between the world we live in and the world we want. These goals represent people’s aspirations and rights and they must and can be realized.” Sweden announced that a group of nine leaders from different regions — German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the presidents of Brazil, Colombia, Liberia, South Africa, Tanzania and Tunisia and the prime ministers of Sweden and East Timor — will work to ensure implementation of the goals. Undoubtedly, the SDGs comprise the most sweeping agenda ever of global goals; nevertheless, it is the time for “a little less conversation, a little more action.”

— BK

Gujarat Anti-Terror Bill and its Vulnerability

Dr. Aman Mohd Khan*

[The anti-terror law bill passed on 31st March 2015 by the Gujarat Assembly is a matter of concern for all those who believe in democracy and the rule of law. It had passed the Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GCTOC) Bill 2015. The new Bill is a re-worked version of the Gujarat Control of Organised Crime Bill (GUJCOC) 2003, which was earlier rejected by the past Presidents Dr. APJ Abul Kalam and Mrs. Pratibha Patil in 2004, 2008 and 2009 respectively, due to some of its contentious provisions that threaten the fundamental rights of the citizens.]

The present bill contains the same provisions which were objected by the former Presidents; only minor changes are made to the earlier versions. The new Bill of 2015 retains the same provisions of GUJCOC¹. The Bill, when becomes a law, will give sweeping powers to the Gujarat police to play with the life, liberty and dignity of the citizens of the country. The police force of Gujarat is already infamous for its biased role against the minority community of the state during 2002 post-Godhra riots and its aftermath.

The communalization of police in Gujarat has been taking place since long. The Gujarat Police had been under the influence of the Hindu nationalist political party Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), which became a leading political force and came to power in 1995 in the state of Gujarat. After February 1998, when Mr. Keshubhai Patel came to power, a calculated displacement of Muslims in Gujarat police began².

All Muslim officers were assigned to Law and Order-Crime Investigation rather than given executive posts and were deliberately kept away from decision-making posts. As a result of this unconstitutional policy of the Gujarat government, the younger batch of Muslim IPS officers who passed out in '92-'93 never got the chance to exercise their executive capabilities; they have never seen executive policing. Gujarat is the only state in the country where IPS officers who are Muslims have never been assigned the post of deputy SP of police³.

The biased attitude of the police reached its peak during and after the 2002 post-Godhra communal violence. The anti-Muslim image of the Gujarat police is self evident from the fact that another draconian law, Prevention of Terrorist Act (POTA), was selectively applied on all accused of Godhra train incident, who happened to be Muslims. This is not applied to others accused of violence in the state.

But these terrorism charges were later dropped after a central review committee ruled POTA to be inapplicable in this case. This aggressive, decisive, and zealous response by the Gujarat police and judicial authorities' stands in contrast to their handling of the post-Godhra riot cases alleging violence against predominantly Muslim communities.

It was Gujarat police which had falsely arrested 12 Muslims in the murder case of former Gujarat Minister Haren Pandya. Terming the murder as part of a larger Muslim terror conspiracy to avenge the 2002 post-Godhra riots, the CBI invoked the POTA to record confessions from 12 persons who had been hauled in from Ahmedabad and Hyderabad, who were later released by the High Court⁴.

It was Gujarat police who conducted extra-judicial encounter killings after 2002-riots, mostly of Muslim youths all over the state, almost all on the same pretext that they were going to kill the then chief-minister Narendra Modi and other senior VHP leaders. Gujarat saw 21 encounter killings between October 2002 and December 2006, due to which 23 police officers of Gujarat Police were arrested, of whom 8 were IPS⁵. Again, it was Gujarat police which falsely apprehended the Muslims in the

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Akshardham-Temple raid, who were later exonerated by the Apex court after facing torture and imprisonment for 11 years on the very same day on which Narendra Modi was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India.

The people arrested were those who had established relief-camps for the riot victims of 2002. Apart from these highly publicized cases, a large number of innocent young Muslims have been, and are being victimized by the police on the charges of being involved in various terrorist acts. Most of these individuals are charged with multiple cases (in some cases upto 30) so that they spend their life time in fighting them⁶.

The persons picked by the police are not shown to be arrested until many days pass, which is a gross violation of the law. Their families are also not informed about their arrest. In many cases, they have been tortured in Police custody and made to “confess” and sign blank papers. The police have often humiliated Muslim detainees on religious grounds. The Courts are routinely allowing police remand and not granting bail, merely on the basis of police statements asking for further investigation⁷.

The courts do not examine whether there is any evidence against the accused. Unfortunately, the media too uncritically publicizes the charge and allegations leveled by the police. This has resulted in the destruction of the lives and reputations of a large number of persons who are picked up by the police and later found to be innocent. When the victims are acquitted or discharged on being found innocent they are not compensated for the destruction of their lives and reputations. Even when the case against victims is found to be totally cooked up, no action is taken to hold the concerned police officials accountable.

This has led to impunity among the police officials, as a result of which they are casually and callously picking up and victimizing innocent persons, particularly Muslims, sometimes even to extract money from them. Recently, the Gujarat police were caught in Surat city in a mock drill to nab terrorist, where terrorists wore Muslim skull caps. This is a reflection of their sick mindset that, as if, terrorist can only be a Muslim.

The draconian provisions of the Bill include Clause 16 that stipulates that “*a confession made by a person before a police officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police...shall be admissible in the trial of such accused, co-accused, abettor or conspirator.*” This can be equated as giving license to torture the apprehended person.

The Bill also provides for extension of the period of investigation from the stipulated 90 days to 180 days. Furthermore, the legislation makes offences under the Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime Act, 2015, non-bailable. Clause 20 (4) of the Bill states, “*Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, no person accused of an offence punishable under this Act shall, if in custody, be released on bail or on his own bond.*”

When the state police force is empowered with such provisions, then one can imagine how much power such a provision will provide to the police to obtain confession by harassing, intimidating and using third-degree on the accused for a much longer period of time.

Also, the proposed bill will empower the police with provisions like permitting admissibility of evidence collected through interception of mobile calls of an accused person. The Bill makes “*evidence collected through the interception of wire, electronic or oral communication*” admissible in the court and we have, in the recent past, come across news of snooping and stalking people by the Gujarat police on the behest of top politicians⁸. When such provisions are provided then its genuine applicability becomes highly doubtful.

Furthermore, it provides immunity to the State government from legal action. Clause 25 of the Bill states, “*No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the State government or any officer or authority of the State government for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act.*” It is something like giving legitimacy to do anything in the name of good faith.

However, it should be noticed that it is Gujarat state which has the dubious distinction of being the state

which has the highest-per capita rate of deaths during communal violence in the country⁹, therefore, the quantum of loss of lives and property due to communal violence far exceed the loss suffered due to the act of terrorism in Gujarat.

One more objectionable point to be raised about the Act is that it is unconstitutional on the part of the State Assembly to make such laws which is the domain of the Parliament of the country. The federal distribution of powers between the Centre and states under the Constitution ensures that only Parliament can legislate on matters such as terrorism that relate to the security or sovereignty of the nation.

States cannot arrogate this power to themselves by devising harsh anti-terror laws that apply only within their respective territories. The unconstitutionality of the Gujarat Bill is not just a sum of its numerous illegal parts, but rooted in a deeper, more fundamental failing, namely, that the Gujarat assembly did not have the power to pass such a law in the first place. With the exclusive power to make laws relating to “defence of India” and also with residuary power to make laws on matters not listed. State legislatures have exclusive power to make laws on “public order” while both Parliament and state legislatures have concurrent power to make laws relating to “criminal law” and “criminal procedure.”¹⁰

There is rapid increase in the communalisation of Gujarati society at large. Hindutva campaign has been very sustained and comprehensive in Gujarat for the past so many years. Intolerance and hatred are deeply grown. Recently about 450 families in Baroda were to be relocated to two housing projects in the city. But they now face an uncertain future because residents of the neighborhood where they were being moved are “objecting”, saying they don’t want “problem elements” in their midst¹¹. There are many examples of such cases of not allowing Muslims to live in their vicinity in the present day Gujarati society.

Conclusion

So, keeping in mind, the track record of the Gujarat Police, if the state police are given such provisions

then it will certainly put in danger the fundamental freedom and rights of the citizens of the state. The fear and apprehension of the people having different religious and political affiliation from the ruling establishment is genuine. It will be more important for the Gujarat Assembly to pass an Anti-Communal Violence Bill along with this Anti-Terror Bill with all sincerities, so that peace, tranquility and rule of law can be established in the state in the real sense.

But there seems a ray of hope to emerge because recently the NDA government at the Centre has sent back the controversial Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GCTOC) Bill, 2015 to the state government, after certain objections were raised by the Ministry of Information and Technology (IT). The IT ministry has rightly objected to a provision in the Bill which allows authorisation of interception of telephone conversations and their admissibility as evidence before a court of law. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had sent the Bill to the IT ministry as part of inter-ministerial consultation, because such provisions will not only violate the Right to Privacy but also give sweeping powers to the state police. The police will get the right to physical and psychological torture of the citizens, which will be a flagrant violation of the fundamental and basic right enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

NOTES

1. ‘Gujarat Anti-Terror Law bill passed finally’, *The Hindu*, 1 April 2015.
2. See Aman M. Khan, *Police and Human Rights: A study of communal violence in Gujarat*, Manak, New Delhi, 2014, p.237.
3. Ibid
4. See Shastri Ramachandaran, “Haren Pandya’s Murder: Questions without Answers”, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 24 December 2011, Vol. xlvi. No 52, pp10.
5. As told to this author during interview with Advocate (Late) Mukul Sinha, on 2 October 2012.

6. See ANHAD. (2014). *Tracing Lives of Muslims in Gujarat Post 2002*. New Delhi: Author. pp 6.
7. Ibid
8. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=428&v=roVZrT2_xuc (accessed on 25/4/15)
9. See Rowena Robinson. (2008). *Tremors of Violence: Muslim Survivors of Ethnic Strife in Western India*. SAGE: New Delhi. pp.82.
10. Alok Prasanna Kumar and Aarthi Rajan, “Unconstitutionality of Anti-Terror Laws The Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime Bill, 2015”, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 11 July 2015. Vol. I. No. 28. pp.35.
11. See “450 Muslim families stuck, Vadodara doesn’t want them next door”, *Indian Express*, 4 April 2015.



Global Financial Crisis: Options for India

Ms. Fiona Jeelani*

[Developed capital markets are favorable to the long-term development of a more stable financial system, especially for India which has an economy of \$1.6 trillion and a savings rate of approximately 33.7% and at the same time requires approximately \$500 billion of capital for infrastructure development. Thus, a well developed and efficient capital market is the need of the hour. Investors in India prefer investments that are risk-averse.]

Only less than 1% of a total population of more than 1.2 billion are active participants, with a mere approximate 10% of their investments in the capital market. Because of this, retail equity ownership amounts to approximately 10% of total equity ownership due to which trading volumes are relatively lower than other countries (Sikka 2012). The corporate debt market is also under-developed. An under-developed capital market system eventually results into financial inefficiency.

Consequently, investor awareness and penetration of retail markets has become inevitable for the optimum growth of the capital market. Financial deepening (opening up and further globalizing) is seen as an angel and demon at the same time. Decisions have to be taken on the front of whether the Indian financial markets should retreat from further globalizing and integrating or whether it should globalize further to become more developed and efficient.

One path leads to a structure that relies primarily on domestic capital formation and concentrates risks within local banking systems, while another points toward a healthier model of financial globalization that corrects the pre-crisis excesses while supporting more robust economic growth. Achieving this second outcome will require rigorous actions by the Indian policy makers.

Impact of the Global financial Crisis: Slowing Growth

Regulatory measures and developments in the international financial markets have an impact on the Indian financial market. The financial shock was also transferred to the Indian Capital market through a variety of means which included credit squeeze, sudden stop in financial flows and reduction in export earnings. The global financial crisis had its effects mostly on the developed economies, which were at the heart of the crisis, but the developing economies were also affected.

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The loss of momentum in financial depth was not only confined to the advanced economies. Developing markets weathered the crisis well, but their financial depth is on an average less than half

that of advanced economies as of 2012 (157 percent of GDP compared with 408 percent of GDP). This gap was narrowing before the crisis, but it is no longer closing. (McKinsey, 2013)

Table 1: Top 5 contributors to Global Financial Depth
(In percent of all countries' GDP)

| | 1989 | | 2009 |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| World | 4.25 | | 6.71 |
| Advanced countries | 3.93 | | 5.50 |
| US | 1.38 | US | 1.96 |
| Japan | 1.20 | Japan | 0.88 |
| UK | 0.24 | UK | 0.52 |
| Germany | 0.23 | Germany | 0.41 |
| France | 0.19 | France | 0.36 |
| | | | |
| Emerging Markets | 0.32 | | 1.21 |
| Brazil | 0.08 | China | 0.48 |
| China | 0.04 | Brazil | 0.11 |
| Hong Kong SAR | 0.03 | Hong Kong SAR | 0.10 |
| Korea | 0.03 | Korea | 0.08 |
| India | 0.02 | India | 0.08 |

Source: BIS, World Bank, updated and extended Lane and Milesi-Feretti (2007) dataset, IMF staff calculations.

Financial deepening is widely believed to confer important stability benefits; it helps to limit fluctuations in asset prices, find alternative sources of funding, and reduces the need for reserve accumulation.

The world's financial assets—or the value of equity market capitalization, corporate and government bonds, and loans—grew from around \$12 trillion (in 1980 to \$206 trillion in 2007. Financial depth, which measures those assets relative to GDP, rose from 120 percent to 355 percent of global GDP over the same period. (McKinsey, 2013)

Table 2: GDP Growth Rates (Percent change)

| Country | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---------|-------|--------|--------|
| US | 1.790 | -0.291 | -2.802 |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| United Kingdom | 3.427 | -0.769 | -5.170 |
| Germany | 3.389 | 0.807 | -5.085 |
| Japan | 2.192 | -1.042 | -5.527 |
| France | 2.285 | -0.081 | -3.147 |
| China | 14.146 | 9.635 | 9.214 |
| India | 9.081 | 3.891 | 8.480 |

Source: International Monetary fund Database

As can be seen from the table, the status of growth before and after the financial crisis struck. Although India did seem to be insulated from the crisis, but the real effect could be felt when the crisis intensified. There is a positive correlation between financing for the Government and corporate sectors and subsequent GDP growth. A decline in financial deepening could, therefore, slow down the economic growth of India.

The risk being that continued slow growth in financial assets may hinder the economic growth, depress business investment, as well as decelerate investment in innovation and infrastructure. The grim economic outlook may force many countries to return to protectionism of their domestic industry and to prevent such incidents where unemployment is an option as there certainly has been a severe decline in the cross border-capital flows as the aftermath of the crisis.

Impact on the Indian economy

Although India did not have direct exposure to the subprime crisis and with limited dependence on exports which account for less than 15% of the GDP and growth mostly dependent on domestic investments and demand, the Indian economy was still impacted by the crisis and the GDP fell from a 9% growth to 6%.

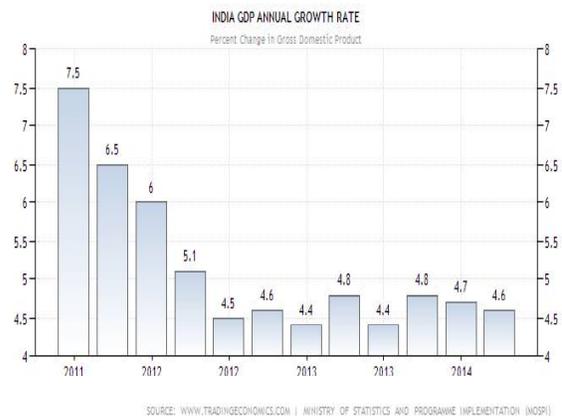
The financial crisis has impacted India through three channels: financial markets, trade flows, and exchange rates. The initial effect of the crisis was, in fact, positive, as the country received accelerated Foreign Institutional Investment (FII) flows during September 2007 to January 2008. But as the crisis increased it spread to the emerging economies through capital and current account of the balance of payments. The net portfolio flows to India eventually turned negative.

The stock market and the exchange rates were affected through the supply-demand imbalance in the foreign exchange market. The current account was mainly affected after September 2008 through slowdown in exports. This reversal in capital inflows, which created a credit crunch in domestic markets along with export demand severely being reduced, contributed to the decline of gross domestic product by around 3% in the fiscal year 2008–09.

India has been rigorously integrating in the world economy. The sum of merchandise exports and imports as a proportion of GDP grew from 21.2% in 1997-98, the year of the Asian crisis, to 34.7 % in 2007- 08. From 2003-08, the share of investment

in India’s GDP rose by 11% (ASSOCHAM). For the corporates, while the funds were available domestically, they were quite expensive; therefore, a significant proportion of funding came from foreign sources.

Also, looking at India’s promising growth potential, foreign investors were willing to provide the funds. This became the main reason for deeper financial integration in India. The negative effects of the crisis began in early 2008 with the withdrawal of capital from the Indian financial markets. This is shown in India’s balance of payments as a substantial decline in net capital inflows in the first half of 2008-09 to US\$ 19 billion from US\$ 51.4 billion in the first half of 2007-08, a 63 percent decline (Bajpai, 2011). This is seen from a large outflow of portfolio investment (as equity disinvestment by foreign institutional investors); and lower external commercial borrowings, short-term trade credit, and short-term bank borrowings.



When compared to countries across the world, India stands out as one of the best performing economies. Although there was a clear moderation in growth from 9 percent levels to 7+ percent soon after the crisis hit, in 2010-11, at 8.6 percent, GDP growth is far from the pre-crisis levels and if India can attain and sustain growth rates of 9+ percent that it had achieved prior to the crisis, this will give a hike to domestic savings. Stronger growth should attract

more foreign savings, especially foreign direct investment, and thus raise the investment rate.

In 2007 - 08, India received capital inflows amounting to over 9 % of GDP as against a current account deficit in the balance of payments of just 1.5 % of GDP. These capital flows, in excess of the current account deficit, prove the importance of external financing and the depth of India's financial integration.

As compared to the previous robust five years of growth, moderation started in the second half of 2008-09. There was a negative growth in industrial output, for the first time since 1990s, which was because of the decelerating external demand which affected performance, something that can be attributed to the increasing integration of India to the outside world.

The Two Pathways: Retreat or Advance

After the shock of the global financial crisis, emerging as well as developed economies are trying to figure out whether openness is necessary for a healthy financial sector. India has a choice between the two pathways, as to how to progress in the future. The two pathways are, either to "retreat" from the current position of further liberalizing the financial sector. This would eventually result in lower growth. Or on the other hand, to "advance" forward with gradually liberalizing but at the same time controlling and regulating the cross border capital flows.

Emerging economies have long worried that a large financial sector is a potential hazard, and if fully liberalized, they curtail further financial market development. But at the same time, as predicted in a report, (McKinsey, 2013) by 2020 as emerging economies account for a larger share of global GDP, their lack of further financial deepening would reduce the global ratio by around 25 percentage points. A more conservative market can hold back the access of the local economy to much needed expansion capital.

Also, a study by Ranciere et al (2008), found that countries with occasional financial crises grow faster

on an average than those with completely stable conditions. Greater integration of the Indian capital market offers four principal, and inter-related, benefits: Better allocation of capital, more efficient risk sharing, enhanced portfolio diversification and lower cost of capital (Merton, 1987).

The "retreat" scenario is one which is shaped by a high degree of risk aversion—one that may squeeze the financing needed for investment in innovation and R&D, business expansion, infrastructure, housing, education, and human capital development. As a consequence of the crisis a reduction in long-term lending to corporations is already apparent in Europe.

In such a scenario, the Indian economy may face massive investment needs as it gets urbanized and industrialized, but at the same time may encounter a shortage of capital. If other developed countries follow the same trend they would find themselves with surplus capital but with too few good investment opportunities; savers and investors in these countries could face lower returns.

If the trend of retreat is to be chosen, the value of global financial assets relative to GDP would remain flat or even decline by 2020. Based on an analysis (McKinsey, 2013) of the relationship between financing to households and non-financial corporations and economic growth, it is estimated that the lack of financial deepening could potentially reduce GDP growth by roughly 0.45 percentage points.

On the contrary, with completely unrestrained capital flows, it is no longer possible to control the amount of capital inflow or outflow, and both movements can create consequences which are undesirable. It is increasingly recognized that liberalization can dismantle the very financial structures that are crucial for economic growth. A better outcome would involve more sustainable growth and development of the financial system.

The Way Forward

The crisis has stressed the need for greater caution and stability, but unless current regulatory reform initiatives succeed in restoring confidence, there is

a possibility of excessive caution. This will risk creating a financial system that fails in its primary purpose, that is, of providing a healthy flow of credit to the economy. India has huge domestic demand, which needs to be tapped.

Greater participation from Global Institutional Investors assures greater liquidity and enhanced reputation of the market, leading to better valuations of companies listed on Indian Exchanges. In addition, such reforms would also have additional benefits like job creation in financial cities of India and exposure to global corporate securities laws. India has to move towards a healthier model of financial globalization that corrects the pre-crisis excesses while supporting more robust economic growth.

Achieving this outcome will require rigorous actions by the Indian policy makers. There should be quick and consistent policy making which can transmit positive signals to the private sector for boosting the investment levels in the economy. Retreating even though can insulate the economy from the crisis situations but is not a feasible option, as it will weaken the growth trajectory that India is dreaming of to be reaching by 2020.

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PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

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India-Bangladesh Cultural Cooperation

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[Culture has played the most important role in the bilateral relationship of India and Bangladesh. Both the countries have destroyed the “Berling Wall” of anger, hatred and mistrust between them. The culture has been proved to be the biggest vehicle of peace, friendship and development in the region. Cultural cooperation has become ever stronger between two countries. As the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) is signed India and Bangladesh ink a golden chapter in the bilateral history. The new regimes in Delhi and Dhaka have taken the relationship to the new ever height. This is the biggest icebreaker since Indira-Mujhib treaty of 1972.]

The new Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi is not only making promises but also acting on them. He makes the bilateral relations stronger as he said India and Bangladesh are not only close to each other but together. India's relations with Bangladesh are civilisational, cultural, social and economic. There is much that unites the two countries—a shared history and common heritage, linguistic and cultural ties, passion for music, literature and the arts. Both the countries also share a common freedom struggle in 1947.

Bangladesh and India are South Asian neighbours and part of the historical Indian subcontinent. They are common members of organizations like SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA and the Commonwealth. In particular, Bangladesh and the East Indian States of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura are Bengali-speaking. India and Bangladesh are close strategic partners in the war against terrorism.

With the onset of economic liberalization in South Asia, they forged greater bilateral engagement and trade. They are now the largest trading partners in South Asia. Bangladesh is extremely crucial to India for geo-political considerations. On 7 May 2015, the Indian Parliament, in the presence of Bangladeshi diplomats, unanimously passed the LBA Bill as its 100th Constitutional Amendment and later on 6 June 2015 two PMs signed the ratification agreement.

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Cultural cooperation among nations is a means of creating a congenial climate for international peace, friendship and goodwill. Cultural integration, therefore, presupposes a congenial atmosphere, which could be created only with the integrated development of the social, political and economic life of the country at large. Globalization, on the other hand, compels cultures to be integrated for the sake of human beings. It has been argued that there is nothing in war and conflict, except disaster.

The time has come to think beyond the national borders to make progress of the human civilisation. The international integration and world human civilisation can only be possible through the integration of world cultures. The zone of conflict must be changed into the zone of culture or peace through the culture of non-violence and brotherhood and universal fraternity.

Cultural Cooperation Agreement between India and Bangladesh, 30th December 1972.

Both the countries have agreed to conclude the Cultural Agreement and for that purpose have nominated their respective plenipotentiaries i.e.

Article-1

The Contracting Parties shall endeavour to promote and stimulate cooperation between universities, academies, schools and institutions of higher learning, technical, scientific and art institutions, laboratories and research institutions, libraries and museums. To achieve this objective, the Contracting Parties shall

encourage in accordance with their respective internal legislation:

- (a) Exchange of representatives and delegations in the fields of culture, education, science and arts; and
- (b) Exchange of cultural, scientific and educational material, translation and exchange of books, periodicals and other scientific, technical and cultural publications, and as far as possible, exchange of archaeological specimens.

International Cultural Cooperation—UNESCO

For the promotion of trans-border cultural cooperation or exchange, UNESCO, has been given the central role among the United Nations' agencies. The rapid emergence of new states in former colonial territories led, however, to increasing focus upon cultural cooperation as a means of dealing with developmental problems. These called for assistance in strengthening the basic sources of education, science, the mass media and the humanities. The constitution also states that the wide diffusion of culture and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfill in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern. These are clearly visible in the UNESCO charter.

Article-I

1. Each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved.
2. Every people have the right and duty to develop its culture.

Article-V

Cultural cooperation is a right and duty for all nations, which should share with one another their knowledge and skills.

India Bangladesh Cultural Cooperation

India-Bangladesh cultural cooperation or culture of cooperation started since long. It is said that a new era had started with the visit of the Bangladeshi PM

to India in June 2006. Earlier a bilateral agreement was signed by India and Bangladesh on 21st March, 2006, at New Delhi in this regard.

Cultural Cooperation

India and Bangladesh have established a strong cooperation especially in the realm of culture, art and education, fields of science and technology. Both share close historical, cultural and ethnic links. The cultural agreement between the two countries was first signed in December 1972. The India-Bangladesh cultural agreement known as the Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP), covers cooperation including art and culture, mass-media including TV, radio, films and press, sports and youth activities, archaeology, museums, libraries and archives, and education activities.

On 12th September 2012, Culture Ministers of two countries exchanged ideas about capacity building and trainings of the officers and technical staff from Bangladesh. Both sides also agreed to strengthen institution-to-institution coordination in the fields of conservation and restoration, drama, literature, fine arts and performing arts etc., apart from exchanging exhibitions. To promote bilateral cultural exchanges, the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre of Indian Council for Cultural Relations was inaugurated at Dhaka on 11th March 2010.

The joint inaugural ceremonies of 150th Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore were held in Dhaka on 6th May and New Delhi on 7th May 2011 and the 90th Anniversary of the publication of the poem 'Bidrohi' by Kazi Nazrul Islam in 2011-12. In the year 2014, 11 cultural troupes from India gave 25 performances in Bangladesh. On 27th March 2015, a five-day painting exhibition and cultural exchange programme between India and Bangladesh was organised in Tripura, with the aim of improving relations between the two nations through people-to-people contact.

Cultural Exchange Programmes

Secretary level discussions on India-Bangladesh cooperation in the field of culture was held in New Delhi on 7th April 2011. The Indian delegation was led by Jawhar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India and the Bangladesh delegation

was led by Ms. Suraiya Begum, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Culture Secretary also called on Minister of Culture, Kumari Selja. A Joint Commemorations of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindra Nath Tagore was organised, including, *inter alia*, opening ceremony on 6th May 2011 at Dhaka and 7th May 2011 at New Delhi.

Bangladesh participated in the International Film Festival at Goa in November, 2010. The Golden Peacock award of Rs. 4 million was won by the film “Moner Manush” co-produced by Indian producer Gautam Kundo and Bangladeshi producers Habibur Rahman Khan and Faridur Reza Sagar. During the discussions both sides identified several activities. Such as: Training of Bangladeshi scholars in the leading National institutes, including the National School of Drama, National Museum Institute, National Archival Institute and National Institute of Archaeology. Joint programmes were to be organized in India and Bangladesh between May 2011 and May 2012 covering Performing Arts i.e. dance, drama and films, of original prints and paintings, exhibitions, seminar / conferences / scholar retreats, etc.

A high level eight-member delegation led by Abul Kalam Azad, Minister of Culture and Information, Republic of Bangladesh called on Kumari Selja, Minister of Culture and HUPA on 12th September 2012. They appreciated the successful implementation of a number of articles listed in the current CEP for the years 2010-12. The popularity of Indian television and fashion is also having an impact on Bangladesh’s language, film industry and even cultural celebrations. Globalization has opened many ways to explore extraneous cultures, and it gives Bangladesh an amazing opportunity to know about foreign cultures.

Education Exchange Programme

Education is another most important area for cooperation. Bangladesh is not very efficient in educational development. India has promised to build a healthy bilateral relation in this sector. All courses offered by any University or Institute in India are open to Bangladeshi nationals under the

foreign student category. However, except religious courses all other courses like MBBS, BE, MCA, MBA, Hotel Management, M.PHIL/PHD and other Professional Courses.

For general courses such as Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree in Arts, Pure Science, Commerce, Cultural Courses, Education and Law Bangladeshi students can approach Foreign Students Advisor of any Indian University for admission provided 12 years of schooling has been completed successfully.

For MBBS, BDS, B.E., B. Pharma and Diploma in Engineering courses Bangladeshi students desirous of seeking admission to these courses in India especially in government institutions, should apply through Education Wing of High Commission of India. While MBBS, BDS, and diploma in engineering courses can be pursued under self-financing scheme of Government of India, BE and B. Pharma courses can be pursued under both.

India is also cooperating in IT sector. India has given so many computers and other educational equipment to Bangladesh. Exchange of teacher is another area of cooperation and both are cooperating in a democratic manner.

Fellowships for Foreign Students

Government Scholarships—The Government of India offers a number of scholarships every year to international students who wish to pursue their studies in India. Offer of scholarships are sent to the respective Governments through Indian diplomatic missions abroad.

Commonwealth Fellowship—Scholarships and fellowships are offered annually under this scheme to candidates from Commonwealth countries mainly for postgraduate studies, though a few awards may be made available for undergraduate studies. Short duration scholarships are also offered under this scheme for scholars wishing to collect material for conducting research projects back home.

Reciprocal Scholarships—Fellowships available for candidates wishing to do postgraduate study or research in any subject specialise in Indian Classical Music, Indian Classical Dance, Painting, Sculpture,

Drama and Indian Languages also come under this scheme. For undergraduate courses, international students may join any university or a recognised institution.

SAARC Fellowship—To promote interaction among students, scholars, academicians from SAARC countries, the Government of India has introduced the SAARC Fellowship and Scholarship Scheme. Six fellowships and twelve scholarships are offered annually to the nationals of member countries viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, therefore, two each to all SAARC Member Countries to pursue UG, PG and Ph.D. courses. Fellowships and scholarships are offered for studies in areas of Economics, Education, Environment, Agriculture, Mass Communication, Language and Literature, Sociology, Transport Engineering, Applied Economics, Master of Business Administration Programme, Biochemistry, Social Work, Food Technology and Home Science.

ICCR Scholarship—The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India offers ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) scholarships to the students all over the world. ICCR covers 100 scholarships under its umbrella, offered for undergraduate and post graduate Programmes in Performing and Visual Arts. Subjects include Indian Classical Music, Dance, yoga, Painting and Sculpture. Scholarships for Bangladesh Under this Scholarship Scheme, 200 scholarships are offered to Bangladesh nationals, 100 under the ICCR programme (Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme, UG, PG, Ph.D. including Engineering Courses) as well as 100 under agency work India Scholarship (Bangladesh) Scheme on behalf of the MEA to pursue UG, PG, Ph.D./Post-Doctoral Courses.

Ayush Scholarship—This scheme is meant for BIMSTEC and Non-BIMSTEC member countries. Under this scheme 50 scholarships are provided to pursue courses in Indian traditional medical system such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy. The BIMSTEC countries covered are Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar.

Cooperation in Science and Technology (S&T)

Presently India has bilateral S&T cooperation agreements with 44 countries and Bangladesh is one of them. Formal interaction on science and technology between India and Bangladesh started with the signing of an Agreement in 1982. In the 5th meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Commission held in New Delhi in March 1997 it was suggested that a Joint Committee be set up at the inter-governmental level to work out a Programme of Cooperation (POC).

An India-Bangladesh Joint S&T Committee was constituted in July 1998 with Secretary, Science & Technology as the Co-chairman from each side. A POC on Science & Technology for 1999-2000 was concluded in February 1999 in Dhaka. The Protocol was renewed in 2001 for another two years.

An India-Bangladesh Technology Cooperation Seminar in Information Technology and Horticulture & Food Processing was organised in Calcutta in September 2000. The Second Meeting of the Joint Committee was held in New Delhi in January 2001 when a fresh Protocol of Cooperation for the period 2001/2002 was concluded. Furthermore, the First BIMST-EC Experts' Meeting on Technology Cooperation, where India Bangladesh are members, was held in New Delhi on 18th-19th December 2000.

The member countries agreed for the creation of databases to facilitate the sharing of information on indigenous technologies, S&T expertise, training facilities etc. Main objectives were: Exchange visit of scientists, organization of joint symposia, seminars, conferences, exploratory visits. Subject areas are: agricultural sciences, biotechnology, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences including Meteorology, Information Technology and Environmental Sciences.

India and Bangladesh have agreed on 22nd September 2014 to move forward on bilateral cooperation in two high technology areas – nuclear field and space. In the last six years, the governments of both nations have flagged and signed MoUs on approximately 51 issues. It may be recalled that during a recent visit to the Indian Space Research

Organization (ISRO), PM Modi had said he wanted the benefits of India's science and technology and space to reach other developing nations, especially SAARC countries. Modi has invited more researchers and scientists from Bangladesh to undergo training and exposure in various Indian scientific institutions, particularly in the areas of biotechnology and oceanography, which are identified as priority areas by Bangladesh.

Cooperation in Agriculture Sector

India and Bangladesh are highly agricultural countries with over three-fourths of the population living in rural areas and dependent on agriculture-related occupations. Within Asia, Bangladesh and India are the two largest consumers of rice, the most cultivated grain. Formalization of Cross-border Trade in rice seeds can help improve the situation, especially with regard to their availability and accessibility.

Trade in rice seeds is conspicuous by its absence. As Bangladesh is a net importer of rice seeds and as data reveals that Bangladesh's trade cost with India is lower than its other trading partners. This is why there is a need to analyse factors that can enable the formalization of cross-border rice seeds trade and knowledge-sharing on good agricultural practices.

To ensure that the seeds market functions efficiently, and also to meet emerging challenges, India has in place the Seeds Act 1966; Seeds (Control) Order 1983; New Policy on Seed Development 1988; Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001; and National Seeds Policy 2002. Further, Seed Bill 2004 is likely to improve the seed scenario. Bangladesh also has its own seed policy i.e. National Seed Policy (1993); The Seed Ordinance 1977 (Amendments in 1997 and 2005), and The Seed Rules 1998.

Some experts have argued that cost of importing rice seeds from India to Bangladesh is less as compared to those from other countries. There is informal trade in rice seeds between the two neighbours which needs to be formalized. More than 40 participants from different parts of India and Bangladesh, took part in a meeting held in Kolkata on 19th-20th April 2013. With support from Bill &

Melinda Gates Foundation, CUTS International is implementing the seed project in four states in Eastern India, viz. Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal and in Bangladesh. Recently, The Secretaries of Agriculture of the Governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal signed a protocol on cooperation in the evaluation data of rice varieties on 18th October 2014.

Infrastructure of Connectivity

Bangladesh emerges as the center of connectivity towards the West and to East. Under India's USD 800 million credit line and USD 200 million grant, Bangladesh has sought to upgrade its railway infrastructure. Both countries have established grid connectivity and Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company (Pvt.) Ltd is now in the process of setting up a 1320-MW coal based power project. In May 2015, a meeting took place between the Commerce Secretaries to improve the quality of border infrastructure. India has already established a Land Customs Station at Akhaura in Tripura, and similar initiatives are underway in Dawki and Petrapole. Several steps have also been taken under BBIN.

Both the PMs have inaugurated the grid-connectivity to establish the flow of bulk power. Inter-grid connectivity for the flow of bulk power of 500 MW between the western electrical grid of Bangladesh and the eastern electrical grid of India has been established. PMs of both the countries inaugurated the Bharat-Bangladesh Vidyut Sanchalan Kendra at Bheramara on 5th October 2013.

Major cities of India and Bangladesh are well connected by air. At present there are three operational inter-country railway links viz., Petrapol (India)-Benapol (Bangladesh), Gede-Darsana and Singhabad-Rohanpur. Three more between Radhikapur-Birol, Karimganj/Mahisasan-Shahbazpur and Haldibari-Chilhati are proposed to be reopened. Financed by India (2013), one new rail link between Akhaura and Agartala is proposed to be built. The frequency of the bi-weekly passenger train, Maitree Express is three times a week since January 2015. Direct bus services are

available between Dhaka-Agartala and Dhaka-Kolkata.

Since December 2014 a new bus service between Guwahati-Dhaka via Shillong has been planned. Waterways between the two countries are regulated by the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade. Both countries are also part of a number of groupings such as the Mekong Ganga Cooperation Initiative, BIMSTEC, and the BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) economic corridor project.

Youth Exchange Programmes

India wants to create an international perspective among youth in collaboration with other countries and international agencies/organizations on various youth issues. The Department of Youth Affairs also collaborates with the Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia Centre, Chandigarh, in organizing a number of events concerning youth in Commonwealth countries in the Asia-Pacific Region. Against the backdrop of the National Youth Policy objectives, inter-alia, to create an International perspective in the youth and to involve them in promoting peace and understanding, the International Exchange of Youth Delegations has been conceived as an effective instrument.

Under this programme, exchange of youth delegations with friendly countries is taken up on reciprocal basis for promoting exchange of ideas, values and culture amongst the youth of different countries and also to develop International understanding. A 100-member Bangladeshi youth delegation visited India from 13th to 20th October 2014. Regional workshop for 'Evaluating effectiveness of International Youth Exchange Programme' was organized in the Conference Hall of the Central Secretariat Library, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi under the chairmanship of Secretary (Youth Affairs) on 22nd September, 2014.

Economic Cooperation

Both India and Bangladesh need to cooperate with each other in the fields of economics, trade, commerce, and investment. Both the governments recognize the need and requirement of each other in the context of their developing economies on the

basis of equality and mutual benefit. Both the countries have some essential similarities in these sectors like big population emerging middle class large market, and growing per capita income. India has been promised to develop Indian side of Bangladesh like Petrapole. Now the Indian business tycoons have started investing billions of dollars in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is one of the most important markets for India's exports and also an important trading partner. The two-way trade in FY 2012-2013 was US\$5.242 billion with India's exports to Bangladesh accounting for US\$4.743 billion and imports US\$0.498 million. Indian exports to Bangladesh grew sharply from \$ 4.7 billion in 2012-13 to \$ 6.03 billion in 2013-14, registering an increase of 26.35% over the previous year. Similarly, Bangladesh's exports to India in July-September 2014 have increased to US \$ 143.954 million from US \$ 91.750 million.

Bangladesh's bilateral trade deficit with India has been increasing rapidly on average at about 9.5% annually. However, the deficit narrowed in fiscal year 2005/06 when Bangladesh's exports rose to \$242 million while India's exports fell to \$1.8 billion. At the 14th SAARC Summit held in New Delhi in 2007, India announced its decision to grant duty-free access to all imports from Bangladesh. India's negative list for imports from Bangladesh consisted of 763 items in 2006, in 2007 reduced to 744, in 2008 to 480, in 2010 to 47 and in 2011 reduced to 46.

Bilateral Security Cooperation (Intelligence)

Both the countries are prone to the terrorism insurgency and subversive movements. India is a democracy, so not inclined to wage war. Furthermore, relations between Bangladesh and India are reasonably good. But it is for the national security problems that this relationship is getting deteriorated day by day. Arguments and counter argument have spoiled the relations.

There are many persons who believe that Bangladesh has and perhaps currently does provide bases, safe havens, and transport channels for arms

to militant groups working against India in the Northeast region. We all know about these accusations and denials by the government. However, Bangladesh has agreed to cooperate to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and will not permit anti-socials to operate from its soil. It has also agreed to hand over criminals, and to cooperate with intelligence agencies.

Cooperation among Civil Society Groups

Governmental, non-governmental and other independent institutions are continuously putting their efforts towards fostering better relationship between India and Bangladesh. They have taken up several vital issues of Bangladesh-India bilateral relations as the use of common resources, trade and investment, political and security concerns water resources and socio-cultural issues. The dialogues they organize are participated by a number of influential political leaders, representatives of civil society and experts with considerable standing in both the countries, and their deliberations have generated a wealth of knowledge and ideas which can further mutual understanding and cooperation between these neighbouring countries.

The Track-II and III diplomacy helps in solving long standing critical issues and also helps to find out other healthy ways to boost bilateral relations. In this regard it was very helpful for the former PM IK Gujral to implement his new scientific approach, the famous “Gujral Doctrine” in 1996. In 2006, “Editors Dialogue” was organized by South Asian Free Media Association, in Bangladesh, participated by several editors and journalists from both the countries. They discussed several important issues like the misunderstanding that exists between the two countries on security, illegal migration, smuggling and trade deficits.

There are several such institutions as civil society functioning in both the countries i.e. CPD, CPR, BRAC, CUT International, Amnesty International, UN, UNESCO and other national and international research organizations. They have been organizing dialogues, seminars, conferences, publishing reports, doing projects and sometimes give vital suggestions to their respective governments.

Recent Initiatives

Foreign Minister’s visit to Bangladesh

The Indian External Affairs Minister, Mrs. Shusma Swaraj visited Bangladesh on 25th June 2014 and said her approach was “fast-track diplomacy” which has three faces—proactive, strong and sensitive. The visit was “extremely fruitful and satisfying.” The spokesperson of the MEA added that Swaraj was returning with an understanding that “it is an excellent beginning in addressing each other’s concerns and work together with the spirit of good neighbourliness.” Swaraj met the President, PM and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh as well as the leader of opposition Rowshan Ershad and Begum Khaleda Zia of BNP.

In fact, both the BNP and its electoral ally Jamaate-Islami welcomed Swaraj’s visit. Both sides have agreed for new measures to further consolidate bilateral relations. Bangladesh allowed India to ferry food grains to the landlocked Northeast India’s using its territory and infrastructure. Clearly, the government in New Delhi wants to discuss important issues like trade and transit and river water sharing. During her meetings, Swaraj gave a commitment to address Bangladesh’s concerns over sharing of Teesta waters and implementation of the LBA “in a manner that improves the welfare and well-being of both our people”.

Bangladesh Support for International Yoga Day

There are 47 Islamic nations including Bangladesh among the 177 countries of the United Nations General Assembly which officially co-sponsored with India a resolution to establish 21st June as “International Day of Yoga”. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, the UAE, Qatar and Oman were among the Islamic nations that co-sponsored. This is the highest number of co-sponsors ever for any UN General Assembly resolution. The resolution was passed unopposed without a vote.

PM Modi had promoted yoga as a means to project India’s soft power. Some critics accuse him of subtly furthering a Hindu agenda, while some

representatives of Indian Islamic organisations support Yoga Day, saying that *Namaz* includes yogic postures. Yoga is a 5,000-year-old physical, mental and spiritual practice rooted in Hindu tradition. In association of UN System in Bangladesh and Bangladesh Yoga Association, the first ever International Day of Yoga was organized by Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre at National Museum main auditorium in Dhaka.

Indian Prime Minister's Visit

As part of his neighbourhood diplomacy, on 6th June 2015 PM Modi made a historic visit to Bangladesh. He has achieved two miracles of sorts. First, the successful passage of the Constitutional Amendment Bill through both Houses of Indian Parliament that was necessary to implement the LBA with Bangladesh and second to persuade the mercurial West Bengal CM to be present in Dhaka during his visit. On the LBA, Modi has shown his political deftness by neutralising opposition from his own party units in Assam and West Bengal and then bringing CMs—Tarun Gogoi of Assam and Bannerjee of West Bengal—on board.

The Teesta Agreement still remains unfinished business. Around 22 agreements have been signed during the visit. The center piece of visit was clearly the LBA for which the Instruments of Ratification were exchanged. He described the ratification as demolition of the Berlin wall between two countries.

Ratification of LBA Signed

Signing of ratification of LBA is example of cooperation and commitment shown by India. India has set a history of keeping promise for regional integration with signing the LBA on 6th June 2015. This has simplified the 4,096.7km border and clarifies the identities of 52,000 people living in enclaves. Under the deal, signed by PM Modi and Hasina, two countries will swap some 200 tiny enclaves dotted around the border. The Parliament of India passed the 100th Amendment to the Indian Constitution for exchange of pieces of lands. India received 51 Bangladeshi enclaves (covering 7,110 acres (2,880 ha)) in the Indian mainland, while Bangladesh received 111 Indian enclaves (covering

17,160 acres (6,940 ha)) in the Bangladeshi mainland.

The enclave residents are to be allowed to either reside at their present location or move to the country of their choice. The Protocol (referred to as the 2011 Protocol) to the 1974 LBA, signed on 6th September 2011 during the visit of the then PM Dr. Manmohan Singh to Bangladesh. The historic agreement of 2015 will contribute to a stable and peaceful boundary and create an environment conducive to enhanced bilateral cooperation.

Conclusion

Cultural integration is essentially a psychological phenomenon, and its realisation depends on our ability to bring about, above all, the moral identification of the people with the culture. It is said that 'wars begin in the minds of men so it is suggested that the defences of peace must be constructed in the minds of men'. And the culture must be the means of this holy construction. Therefore, this is very much right to say that 'culture builds bridges across the borders'. The culture has been proved to be the biggest vehicle of peace, friendship and development in the region.

During his 2-day visit to Bangladesh, PM Modi tried to strike a chord with Bangladeshis with enough quotable quotes: "*Hum pass pass hain aur Hum sath sath bhi hain* (We are geographically close and we are also closely tied)." On this occasion a total of 22 agreements were signed on issues of connectivity, education, infrastructure, maritime and energy security, and trade, among others. PM Modi said the ratification of the over 44-year-old LBA was a bridge to join hearts and like 'fall of the Berlin Wall'. Addressing a gathering of intellectuals at Dhaka University, Modi said that panchhi (birds), pawan (wind), and paani (water) needed no visa—and that the Teesta issue had to be resolved with a human approach.

Both PMs agreed that strengthening diplomatic and consular presence in each other's country will further boost people-to-people contacts. PM Hasina appreciated the concurrence of the Government of India to the opening of a Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh in Guwahati as well as upgradation of Bangladesh Visa Office in Agartala to an Assistant

High Commission. PM Modi appreciated the concurrence of Government of Bangladesh for the opening of India's Assistant High Commissions in Khulna and Sylhet. Meanwhile, Bangladesh has proposed to share rice with all the Northeastern states of India and has even offered to share ports with them.

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Agricultural Efficiency and Productivity

Asif* and Ajaz Hussain**

[In agricultural geography, the terms agricultural productivity and efficiency are used as synonyms. Agricultural efficiency reflects agricultural production potential while productivity refers to current agricultural performance. In the words of Prof. Shafi, agricultural productivity represents species which agricultural efficiency denotes genus. Productivity is a broader term and includes efficiency within its preview.]

Productivity is generally used to express the power of agriculture in a particular region to produce crops without regard to whether that power is due to the bounty of nature or due to the efforts of men. Sometimes it is considered as the overall efficiency of a production system. Productivity is defined as a ratio of output to resources expanded individually or collectively. This term has also incorrectly and interchangeably used with production. In reality, production refers to the volume of output while productivity signifies the output in relation to resources expanded.

Production can be increased by employing more resources without increasing productivity. On the other hand, productivity can be increased without increasing production by employing less input for the same production. But it is commonly agreed that productivity is the ability of a production system to produce more economically and efficiently. Therefore, agricultural productivity can be defined as a measure of efficiency in a production system which engages land, labour, capital and other resources.

Land Productivity

Land is viewed as an area with different natural attributes. It realizes different rents and sold on different prices. Attention may specially be focused on the productivity of land because of substantial increases in population. Land on unit or regional

basis expresses yield of crops in terms of output and from a national point of view it is desirable to secure the employment of large number of persons. Productivity of land is obviously of primary importance in countries like India where the density of population is high and land resources are limited. The principal means of raising production to keep pace with growing population and the demand for improved diets is by raising yields per hectare.

Raising the productivity of land, however, does not mean only raising the yield of individual crops. It encompasses the whole output of a farm or country in relation to the total area of farmland. It may also be increased by changing the pattern of production towards more intensive system of cultivation and higher value crops.

A distinction must be made between the measurement of agricultural output in terms of calories and in terms of money values. For instance, if in a region land is shifted from cereal crops to potatoes, the output per hectare in terms of calories is likely to be increased, but its productivity in terms of money value may be changed according to the relative prices of cereals and potatoes. Again shifting of land from main crop potatoes to early season potatoes or to vegetables may well increase its productivity in money terms, but the quantum of output may reduce in terms of calories.

Labour Productivity

The assessment of productivity of labour is somewhat more complex aspect than that of land

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productivity. Measurement of labour productivity gives an insight about the income of the population engaged in agriculture and can be assessed in terms of output per worker. It takes into account all the manual labour efforts involved in crop production, the labour that is used directly on the farm as well as used indirectly off the farm in producing the materials and services used on agricultural production.¹

The labour input may be expressed as the total number of persons participating in the labour force or, in order to take into account the intensity of labour, as the number of man-hours worked in agriculture. Similarly, the total agricultural output may be taken as the gross farm output or it may be taken as the value added by labour and other factors in the agricultural sector i.e., the value of fertilizers, pesticides, fuels and other inputs from outside the agricultural sector, is subtracted from the value of the output in order to determine the net contribution of the agricultural sector².

Labour productivity in agriculture has two important aspects. First, it profoundly affects national prosperity, i.e., the national income; second, it principally determines the standard of living of the agricultural population.³

National prosperity in the economic prospective is largely synonymous with the high output per man-hour. Therefore, if a country intends to increase its prosperity it needs: (a) to encourage technical assistance and improvements to the labour population, which helps to increase the productivity and (b) to stimulate a continual transfer of labour from low productivity to high productivity regions.

So far as raising the farmer's standard of living is concerned, there are two ways: either he may be paid more wages than the prevailing regional or national prices for a given amount of work, or the step can be taken to raise output, e.g., productivity from the same resources. Output per man can be improved in an agricultural economy either by (i) giving each farm worker more land and livestock to look after, and (ii) making each unit of land and livestock capable of yielding a bigger output.⁴

Capital Productivity

Productivity measures of capital investments are particularly complicated to compute and more difficult to interpret. This is largely because of both diversity of farms, and the purpose for which capital may be utilized in agricultural production processes. It is generally utilized for the purchase of land, land improvement, land reclamation, drainage, irrigation purposes, livestock purchase, feeds, seeds, fertilizers, agricultural implements and machinery, crop protection chemicals, etc.

Measurement of agricultural productivity

It depends upon conceptually consistent measures of aggregate agricultural output and input. The concept of inputs in productivity studies includes the resources committed to agriculture by the farmers. Measurement of agricultural productivity is not a simple task as it involves a relationship between inputs and output in agricultural production. Many attempts have been made to measure and quantify agricultural productivity in India as well as in other countries of the world.

The Standard Nutrition Method of productivity measurement was suggested by Stamp (1958)⁵, the purpose of which is to convert the total production of crops per hectare into calories and to establish an extent of relationship between agricultural productions i.e., the availability of crop output in terms of nutrition to support a number of persons per hectare of cropped land. Stamp, assumed 10,00,000 calories as the Standard Nutrition Unit.

Shafi (1967)⁶ applied this method on the basis of his surveys in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. He puts 8,00,000 calories as the Standard Nutrition Unit for India. The supporting capacity is calculated by measuring total production per hectare of various crops in terms of calories per unit of land and by comparing total yield of calories with its standard annual requirement per person. The values were added together and divided by the number of crops considered. The results obtained revealed the output of calories per hectare. The method can be written as follows:

$$\frac{1}{N} \left(\frac{P(1) \times \text{Calo}(1)}{A(1) \times 8,00,000} \right)$$

Where

P(1) = total production of the respective crops in the unit area,

PA(1) = area under the crop in the unit

Calo (1) = Caloric value of the crop concerned

N = number of crops

Yong (1965)⁷ formulated a method in which productivity indices of crops considered for each

district were computed. Initially it needed to take the yield of all the crops considered in the district and compare them with the average yield of the same crop grown in the region. Then divide yield per hectare of the crop in the district by the average yield of the same crop in the region, a percentage figure is obtained, which when multiplied by 100 gives an index number. By incorporating the area devoted to each crop as weight and multiply this with the percentage index the products are obtained. By adding the products and dividing the sum of the products by the total crop area in the district the average index thus obtained is the desired crop index for the district.

Example for Calculating the Crop Yield Index using Yang's Method

| Name of the crop | Yield qnt./ha. | | Area of the crop in the district (000 ha.) | crop yield in the district as percentage of the state | Percentage multiplied by the area |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| | Average yield in the state | Average yield in the district | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Rice | 18.72 | 17.83 | 129.50 | 94.94 | 11820.03 |
| Wheat | 25.25 | 27.47 | 2304.01 | 108.79 | 250653.25 |
| Maize | 16.30 | 17.64 | 440.28 | 108.32 | 47647.10 |
| Jowar | 11.26 | 7.25 | 6.29 | 64.39 | 405.01 |
| Bajra | 11.94 | 12.62 | 898.49 | 105.70 | 94970.39 |
| Barley | 23.60 | 27.23 | 377.93 | 115.38 | 43605.56 |
| | | | 4151.50 | 449101.34 | |

Crop yield index for the district: $\frac{449101.34}{4150.50}$

= 108.18 per cent

Bhatia (1967)⁶ incorporates the yield as well as the magnitude of the area under various crops. If the productivity index is obtained only on the basis of the yields per hectare of different crops without taking into account the area under each crop, the

index may be deflected owing to large yield of certain and the result may not be as correct as when the area is also given importance in relation to yields. Bhatia while assessing the changes and trends in agricultural efficiency in the districts of Uttar Pradesh adopted Ganguli's method of productivity measurement and put in an equation form as follows:

$$(i) \quad I = \frac{Y_c}{Y_r} \times 100$$

Where,

I_{ya} = is the yield index of crop 'a',

Y_c = is the average acre yield of crop 'a' in the component unit, and

Y_r = is the average acre yield of crop 'a' in the entire study area

$$(ii) \quad E_i = \frac{I_{y_a} C_a + I_{y_b} C_b + \dots + I_{y_n} C_n}{C_a + C_b + \dots + C_n}$$

where,

E_i = is the agricultural efficiency index,

$I_{ya}, I_{yb}, \text{etc.}$ = are the indices of various crops, and

$C_a, C_b, \text{etc.}$ = represent the proportion of cropland devoted to different crops.

Importance of Agricultural Productivity

Agricultural productivity is becoming increasingly important as the world population continues to grow at a very fast rate. India, second most populated country in the world, needs to increase agricultural productivity to feed its fast growing population. The productivity is very important aspect as Indian economy, directly or indirectly, depends upon it. It plays an important role in income distribution, savings, agricultural market and labour migration.

In a country like India where almost 70 per cent of its population depends on agriculture an increased agricultural productivity will lead to agricultural growth which can help in poverty alleviation and more homogenous distribution of resources. As the farms become more productive the wages earned by those who work in agriculture get increased. At the same time food prices decrease and food supplies become more stable.

Agricultural laborers, therefore, have more money to spend on food, education, clothing and entertainment etc. It is not only those who are employed in agricultural sectors but people employed in secondary and tertiary activities also get benefited from the increased agricultural

productivity. In fact, it has circular effects and the whole economy, directly or indirectly, will be benefited.

Agricultural Productivity in India

When we talk about the productivity of various crops in India it is one of the lowest in the world with the exception of sugarcane. Though, food grain production has increased from 51 million tons in 1950-51 to 210 million tons in 2006-07. Yet the scenario today is not so promising. In recent years, growth has plummeted and is around 2.7 per cent as against the target of 4 per cent.

When we compare India with China, two countries were more or less at par on most of the parameters of agriculture 25 years ago. But since last 20 years China has been steadily growing at between 4 and 5 per cent. By 2005, China had in fact emerged as the world's third largest food donor. The two widest agriculture related discrepancies between India and China lie in diverging productivity levels of various crops.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the average yield of rice in India between 2009 and 2011 was 3,034 kilograms per hectare. In contrast, the comparative figure for China was more than double at 6,233 kg/ha. For wheat corresponding figures were 2,688 kg/ha for India compared to 4,155 kg/ha for China. According to statistics from the International Rice Research Institute, India produced 124 million tons of rice compared to China's 186 million tons in 2011, despite having almost doubled the area under paddy cultivation (42 million hectare vs. 28 million hectare).

Policies for Increasing the Agricultural Productivity

With the population explosion, cultivable land has become deeply fragmented and it is impossible to increase land physically. To feed the growing population we need to increase the productivity per hectare of land. The investment in agricultural operations is increasing particularly after the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). There

is a need to increase MSP for farmers in order to maintain food security and increase farmer's income. The significant increase in MSP for wheat and rice in Punjab, Haryana and Western U.P leads to increase in yield of these crops.

Reduction in subsidies and increase in investment is the need of the hour as subsidies are prone to encourage misuse of resources. There is inverse relationship between investment and subsidies as in 1980s public investment in agricultural operations was 3.40 per cent of the total agricultural GDP which declined to 1.90 in 2001-02. At the same time, subsidies increased from 2.90 to 7.40 per cent of the total agricultural GDP (Government of India, 2007)⁹.

Many of us are of the opinion that small size of land holding is responsible for the low productivity in India but the experience of Chinese and some other South-East Asian countries show that it is not a constraint. For better output from the small size of land holding we need to ensure land leasing, smooth availability of credit at low interest rate and create conditions for easy land access to poor landless laborers from those who wish to leave agriculture.

Development of irrigational facilities and water management are needed for enhanced productivity. Major areas of reform needed in irrigation are: stepping up and prioritizing public investment, raising profitability of ground water exploitation and augmenting ground water resources, rational pricing of irrigation water and electricity, involvement of user farmer in the management of irrigation system and making groundwater market equitable (Rao, 2005)¹⁰. In a recent study Shah et al. (2009)¹¹ indicate that the impact of the drought of 2009 is expected to be less severe than the drought of 2002 due to ground water recharge in last few years.

Formation of land use advisory board and soil testing laboratories at district level, land use survey at block level, marketing facilities without the interference of middle men because the gap between the price of producer and consumer are wide in India, contract farming with the credit facilities, investment in research, diversification of high value crops and technical support for small and marginal

farmers are some of the measures which need immediate implementation.

Interesting Facts

1. The term agricultural productivity and efficiency cannot be used as synonyms.
2. Agricultural efficiency reflects agricultural production potential while productivity refers current agricultural performance.
3. Agricultural productivity has also incorrectly and interchangeably used with production. In reality, production refers to the volume of output while productivity signifies the output in relation to resources expanded.
4. Production can be increased by employing more resources without increasing productivity.
5. Productivity can be increased without increasing production by employing less input for the same production.
6. Agricultural productivity can be defined as a measure of efficiency in a production system which engages land, labour, capital and other resources.

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Enhancing women Empowerment through MGNREGA

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[Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, made real efforts in understanding the rural problems by reminding again and again that the soul of India lives in its villages. The prosperity of India, therefore, depends upon the prosperity of our villages. Since independence, the Government has launched a series of rural development programmes to achieve overall and all-sided development of rural India. MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) is a trail-blazing Act to improve livelihood status and wage employment amongst the rural poor very specially marginalized and unorganized poor women.]

Enacted by the Central Government as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) of 2005, and renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2 October 2009, came in to effect, on a pilot basis, in February 2006 in 200 economically most disadvantaged districts of the country and later from April 1st 2008 onwards it intended to cover all the districts in the country. The act has been implemented in three phases since 2006, providing 448 billion days of employment over a period of three years. About Rs. 34,600 crore has been spent on wages, indicating the gigantic size of this programme intended to benefit the poor and the huge investment that has been made in it.

The MGNREGS, unlike existing social welfare programmes, is a law whereby any adult willing to do unskilled manual labour at a statutory minimum wage is entitled to being employed on public works within 15 days of applying for work in rural areas. Each rural household is eligible for up to 100 days of employment in a financial year. It is thus a legally enforceable right with tremendous potential for providing food security and creating durable community assets for sustainable development of rural areas. It, therefore, proposes 'right-based, job-oriented 'way to growth and development rather than being a resource-based employment scheme (Das Gupta and Sudarshan, 2011).

For the first time in Indian history, employment has been made a legal right through an Act of the Parliament. The Act is structured towards harnessing the rural workforce, not as recipients of doles, but as productive partners in the economic process. This

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is the largest ever public employment programme visualized in human history. Most evaluations- official as well as non-official – show that the implementation of this scheme has been far more effective than any of its predecessor schemes in the country.

Coming against the backdrop of rural distress for over a decade, the scheme was successful in providing much needed relief to the rural poor, apart from raising their awareness and bargaining power. Further, the recent experience shows that the Right to Information [RTI] Act being implemented in the country holds a great promise for improving the effectiveness of a scheme like this and similar schemes designed to improve the lot of poor people in the society.

The empowerment of women was not the main objective and intention of the MGNREGA programme when it was enacted. But there are some provisions like priority to women in the ratio of one third of the total workers (schedule 11(6)), equal wages for women and men (schedule 11(34)) were made in this Act with a view of ensuring that rural women benefit from the scheme. Women empowerment can be considered as a dynamic process which enhances women's abilities to change the structures and ideologies that keep them subordinate. It is a process of challenges, existing power relations and gaining greater control over the sources of power (George E.M, 2009).

Today, nobody can say that women are second to men. There are plenty of examples which show women are successful in making the opportunities available to them by their own way. The topic women empowerment has been discussed elaborately in various international conferences from 1975 onwards. The first UN General Assembly passed a resolution to eliminate all form of discrimination against women. The Vienna Conference of Human Rights (1993), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the Beijing Women's World Conference (1995) also highlighted the need for the promotion of women empowerment programmes all over the world.

In this context, the relevance of MGNREGA is going up and up due to the reason that even though it is not a women empowerment programme, majority of the rural women workforce is actively participating in this programme. This can be considered as the real success and cause of increased acceptance of the programme.

By generating employment for women at fair wages in the villages, MGNREGA can play a substantial role in empowering women economically, socially and politically and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem. This study was an attempt to evaluate the impact and performance of MGNREGA in Edavanakadu Gram Panchayath, in Ernakulam District as a women empowerment programme and to investigate the problems faced by the women labourers in the Panchayat.

Significance of the Study

Women, especially those belonging to the poorer sections of the society, constitute a significant part of the labour force. Although they are not as visible in the formal industrial sector, a large number of poor women are engaged in the informal agricultural and service sectors and make an important contribution to the economic output of the country. The most striking characteristic of these women is the burden of work that they have to bear, both in the domestic domain and when they go out their homes, in order to either earn or supplement family incomes. In the domestic sphere, there is little public intervention to help alleviate the load and drudgery of household work- which includes search for fuel and water, cooking, cleaning and child care- that a woman has to bear.

Unfortunately, their contribution in the economic sphere is poorly reflected in the planning process. Apart from their economic contribution women play a significant role in upholding the moral and ethical fabric of society. The failure to appreciate and strengthen their role has contributed to the breakdown of moral values and the growing violence in our society.

In the light of the above, this study is significant for analysing the impact of MGNREGS on the socio-

economic status of women in Edavanakadu area, Ernakulam District.

Statement of the Problem

MGNREGA is one of the most progressive acts enacted since independence as an objective of eradication of poverty and unemployment. One of the revolutionary changes caused by this Act is in the case of empowerment of rural women. The provisions of the MGNREGA states that among the total registered workers under this Act, one third should be women. As per the available information, it is evident that women population engaged in this programme is outnumbering male population which is engaged here. The study analyses the extent to which this programme is capable of improving the status of poor and marginalized women in Edvanakadu Gram Panchayath in Ernakulam district. The investigation was carried out by undertaking a survey in the area concerned.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to gain an understanding of the performance of MGNREGS and to measure its impact on the socio-economic status of poor and marginalised women in Edavanakad Gram Panchayat area of Ernakulum District.

The specific objectives of the study are:-

- To understand the impact of MGNREGA in improving the socio-economic status of rural women in the study area.
- To identify the problems faced by the women workforce working under MGNREGA.
- To suggest measures for a sustainable MGNREGA for women empowerment in future.

Hypothesis

Women labourers in the study area are getting empowered through MGNREGA and it has brought some changes in their standard of living.

Methodology

The present study was a micro level study and it was based on both primary and secondary data. For collecting primary data, an interview schedule was prepared which was based on broad categories of socio-economic details, such as awareness participation and impact, effect and performance of MGNREGA. In this study the total universe was 50 households who adopted the technique of MGNREGA. The sample constitutes 25 per cent of the household in Edavanakkad Gram panchayat. Simple random sampling method was used in the survey.

Secondary sources include the published books, records and journals. Information was also collected from MGNREGA website. In order to analyze the data subject to MGNREGS and its impact on beneficiaries, the percentage analysis had been used along with diagrammatic presentations such as Multiple Bar diagrams, Column diagrams, and Pie diagrams etc.,

Major Findings of the Study

The study has identified the following findings based on the objectives and has also put forward some suggestions to improve the efficiency in the implementation of the Act. The major findings of the study are the following:

- As regards the educational qualification of the respondents, the data showed that 84 per cent of the respondents are having only primary education and 16 per cent are having secondary education. It is observed that no one has attained higher education level. There are reasons behind the poor educational attainment of the respondents of the study. They are not aware about the importance of education, and their socio-economic and living conditions do not encourage them to study.
- 47 per cent of the sample beneficiaries earn a monthly household income between Rs 4000 and Rs 6000 and 16 per cent of respondents say that they earn a monthly household income more than Rs 6000 and not more than Rs 8000. 28 per cent of respondents earn a monthly household income less than Rs 4000 and 9 per

cent of respondents earn monthly household income more than Rs 8000. The result reveals that the majority of the households earn below Rs. 6,000 per month as income. This is because they are working as casual labour. This income is sufficient for them to meet their basic needs only. They struggle to find alternative and better opportunities.

- Of the total sample size 11 per cent of respondents do not own a house and live in a rented property, 64 per cent of the respondents say that they own less than 10 Cents of land and 25 per cent of respondents say that they own land more than 10 Cents and not more than 15 Cents. The women who do not own a house in the study area show the low economic standard of their lives in the society.
- In the survey 88 per cent of the respondents say that they got work within demand and 12 per cent of respondents say that they did not get work within 15 days of application. 16 per cent of the subscribers get wages on weekly basis, 20 per cent of them get the wage monthly and 64 per cent of the wage earners get their wages on beyond the month basis. All respondents have got work within 5 Km radius of Edvanakad Gram Panchayat. These results of the study reveal the role of MGNREGA in generating employment among beneficiaries.
- The survey conducted was on the savings habit of the wage earners in the post and pre period of MGNREGA. About 8 per cent of the people have the saving habit in the pre period and 92 per cent of people in the post period. Majority of the respondents in the sample have developed the habit of saving due to this scheme. So it is the result that MGNREGA is being a helpful one for the women in the rural areas. The result shows the impact of MGNREGA on the lives of poor and marginalized women in the study area.
- 60 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that MGNREGA has an impact on income and employment of their household on a sustainable

basis. 52 per cent of the respondents have used the additional income earned from MGNREGA in paying of their household debts. 66 per cent of the respondents say that they are able to spend more on their children's education with the money that they earned from MGNREGA. These results of the study also reveal impact and performance of MGNREGA on the lives poor and marginalized women in the study area.

- 24 per cent of the respondents feel that they have been benefited from soil conservation activities in their village under MGNREGA works. 56 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that assets created under MGNREGS are durable. 56 per cent of the respondent's rate work under MGNREGA as good.
- 54 per cent of the respondents feel that they have been benefited by the various developmental activities carried out under MGNREGS in their Panchayat. 82 per cent of the respondents say that they believe MGNREGA has led to empowering women in their family and surroundings. 76 per cent of the respondents opine that there is overall development in their village through the MGNREG scheme. 80 per cent of the respondents who took part in the survey are of the opinion that MGNREGA have brought some changes in their Standard of Living. These results of the study proved hypothesis which was formulated for the study.

Suggestions

- The minimum days of employment should be increased from 100 days to 200 days.
- The minimum wages paid under MGNREGS in Kerala is very low as even an ordinary casual labour gets more than Rs. 500 per day for his work. So the minimum wages of Rs. 125 should be increased.
- The wage is linked to the consumer price index and that it should be done in compliance with the Minimum Wages Act.

- Reduction of the working hours from nine to seven hours.
- Pregnant women, disabled and aged persons are asked to work only half day to earn their full wages.
- More staff should be appointed at the panchayat level to implement MGNREGS

Conclusion

To conclude, if this type of scheme is implemented effectively by involving the women in the rural areas, it would help, apart from improving the rural economic empowerment of women, in enhancing their social status to the best positive extent. MGNREGS has facilitated women's empowerment by providing them opportunities for enhanced participation and cash earnings, which seem to be complimenting another revolutionary programme for offering micro credit across India.

This synergy is expected to create an unprecedented range of positive outcomes in terms of empowering women in the rural areas. While reforms in MGNREGS are also needed to ensure that special efforts are made to provide the requisite passage to the excluded to enable them to enter the folds of the scheme. The researcher finds the provision in MGNREGA is a step forward for the socio-economic development and there is no doubt that this scheme contributes significantly to the success of MGNREGA in improving their economic or social welfare. To sum up, this study reveals that MGNREGA can play a substantial role in empowering women economically, socially and politically and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem.

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Women and Human Rights

Dr. Chadreshekhhar Bansude*

[Women constitute almost 50% of the world's population. The tragedy of this population, however, is that they have to literally beg for their social status as they are not treated as equal citizens. This social disability on the one hand coupled with the inequalities between men and women on the other in the day-to-day life have given rise to what is known as Gender injustice. This is more often a serious issue in countries which have low GDP growth such as South and East Asia and Africa. This also in fact has a very significant impact on the political economy of the countries in focus.]

For a very long time this issue was rather brushed under the carpet by the chauvinistic governments as if there was nothing connected to political economy in this injustice. In fact, they had not even agreed to the use of the term injustice giving the glorified examples of oriental, traditional and epic arguments. The gender problem thus has assumed importance in recent years and the gender issue has become virtually crucial in all developmental and social justice discourses.

It is now widely believed that empowerment of women i.e., providing equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities to women will go a long way in removing the existing gender discrimination. Women empowerment in contemporary Indian society in forms of their work, education, health and media images in the context of lineage, rule of residence and household chores, their participation in social and political activities, their legal status in terms of marriage, divorce and inheritance of property, seeking wealth care should be taken into consideration. Empowerment in terms of knowledge and awareness of one's own life and society including legal rights their status with regard to the lives has thus acquired a significant recognition.

The issue of Rights

The principle of gender equality was recognized in the United Nations Charter in 1945 and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the majority

of development planners did not fully address the role of women in development process. In 1975, the first UN Conference of Women and Development was held at Mexico City under the motto, "Equality, Development and Peace". The need to integrate women into development was internationally proclaimed in the 1995 Beijing Conference. Followed by this were the preparations made by the national governments to put through the policy alternatives.

Empowering thus became one of the alternative policies. This may be understood as enabling women to acquire and possess power and resources, in order to make decision on their own or resist decisions that are made by others that affect them. A person may be said to be powerful when he/she has control over a large portion of power and resources in society. The extent of possession of various resources such as personal wealth, assets, land, skills, education, information, knowledge, social status, position held, leadership traits, thus enable one to have greater mobilization.

The National Policy on Education (1986), therefore, suggested certain strategies to empower women so that they can get the justice and position that is due to her and earn thereby the rights she deserves. Accordingly, women become empowered through collective reflections and decision-making.

Women As partners in Development

The global conference on women empowerment (1988) highlighted empowerment as the best way

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of making women partners in development and restoring to them their dignity and rights.

The development of women and children in rural area (DWCRA) program was initiated as a sub-scheme of the nationwide poverty alleviation program i.e., the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP). It aims at imparting self-reliance to rural areas through income generating skills along with group organization skills. In order to commemorate this, the year 2001 was celebrated as “The Women’s Empowerment Year”. It is this celebration that marked the beginning of human resource development and empowerment of women in India to unlock the door for modernization of society.

Instead of remaining as passive beneficiaries, women must become active partners. Participation and control over resources of power are considered as the critical indicators in the process of development. The disadvantaged women especially in rural area possess the least proportion of these resources and as a result they are powerless and dependent on the powerful and wealthy. As a Human Rights researcher I would like to vouch that this is one of the bold steps that India has taken up in the recent past.

The Economic Survey (1999-2000) in the aftermath of this used an entire section on gender inequality. It began with a reminder of the commitment made in the Ninth plan document of allocating 30 percent of resources for women’s development schemes through “Women’s Component Plans”.

According to Patel (2002), women’s development can be attained by improving their status and bargaining power in the economy. This seems to have been proved correct in this current instance. As if an endorsement of this, in the Union Budget 2004-05, the Finance Minister is reported to have stated that India’s greatest asset is its human resources – the people. Empowering the people especially the poor with universal access to education, health and facilitating their full participation in the growth process through gainful employment would enhance their welfare. It would also reinforce the growth process itself.

At this stage it is appropriate for me to bring in the five paradigms towards women in the developing countries that Caroline Moser (1989) has identified.

- a. Welfare Paradigm
- b. Equity Paradigm
- c. Anti-Poverty Paradigm
- d. Efficiency paradigm and
- e. Empowerment Paradigm

Although all the paradigms referred to above are important, but in this paper we are concerned with the empowerment paradigm, which is the most result-oriented approach.

The impetus to this approach came from the feminist writers and grassroots organizations of the developing world. Women’s culture is supposed to be different from that of the culture of the men and is characterized by softness, tenderness, love and affection. Unlike men’s culture, which is of conquering and aggressive nature, culture of women protects life and nature on this planet; Walter Schubert (1978) brings out admirably these issues.

The family and women’s work is not enough to say that any society consists of men and women. It is equally important to look at how the two groups of people interact as well as at the role and expectations each group has of the other. Such roles and expectations are a product of the stereotypes of each gender. By gender stereotype we mean attributes and qualities commonly associated with a gender.

Conclusion

Thus, the first idea of gender role differences and its impact on the gender justice is in a way legitimately explained here. This is so because when a female child acquires the age of marriage and is leaving home to live with different groups of people, it is necessary that we instill in her the sense of this justice. Secondly, men appear to exercise far greater influence in decision-making and are far more visible and audible than women. This must in no way bar woman from reaching out for her rights whatever

be the type of society and the practices that they follow.

As per 1981 figures, 19.7 per cent Indian women were recorded as paid workers. Of whom over 87 per cent were in the unorganized or informal sector of the economy. The work participation rate of women in 1991 and 2001 was 22.3 and 25.7 per cent respectively. And 2001 to 2011 the work participation rate was 27 percentage respectively (Labour force participation rate, female, World Bank, 2014.)

The increase in the work participation of women during the decade 1991-2001 was mainly due to the increase in the proportion of marginal workers (6.3 per cent to 11 per cent) in the total female work force. The proportion of the main workers, in fact, decreased from 15.9 per cent to 14.7 per cent. It is held by many observers of Indian economy that without women's paid or unpaid labour, the Indian agricultural economy would not be able to function.

In the informal sector, there is no legal redress for women's problems: absence of maternity or other leave benefits and little security of service, long working hours as domestic servants, stitching clothes for the garment export industry, working on the assembly line of small electronics manufacturing units or the beedi, tobacco, cashew nut factories. Women live in fear of retrenchment, exploitation and low wages.

It is, therefore, essential that one should work towards sensitization of these women to restore to them their rightful life under Human Rights canvass. It is possible only when it is realized that it can be

presumed that the women are safe in the society even though it is dominated by men.

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Human Rights of Migrant Rural Labour in India

Sandeep Chowhan*

[Today, the real issue is how to extend human rights to all segments of the labour market. There are many groups of workers in the unorganized sector or informal economy, like migrant workers in agriculture, building and road construction, brick kilns, sugar factories and others, for whom decent work is a very distant goal. There are no strong trade unions of migrant workers in the unorganized sector. The bargaining power of these migrant workers is thus weaker than workers in the organized sector.]

The term ‘Migrant Worker’ has different official meanings and connotations in different parts of the world. The United Nations’ definition is broad, including any people working outside of their home country. The term can also be used to describe someone who migrates within a country, possibly his own, in order to pursue work such as seasonal work.

Migrant: A person, whose last usual place of residence was different from the present place of enumeration on the date of enquiry, has been considered as migrant.

Self-employed: Persons, who work in their own farm or non-farm enterprises, are defined as self-employed, the term used to designate their activity status. There are different kinds of self-employed, some may operate their enterprises without hiring any labour, and some other may occasionally hire a few labourers. There is also a third category by and large, which regularly run their enterprise by hiring labourers.

The first two categories of self-employed are ‘own-account workers’ and the third the ‘employer’. Self-employed persons who are mainly engaged in agriculture and related activities (industry section) are self-employed in agriculture. Unpaid family workers who work for the family firms without receiving any payment and helpers, i.e., those household members who have no share in the family enterprises but receive only shelter, food and clothing

etc. and no wages are also to be considered as self-employed.

Casual labour

Persons engaged in others’ farm or non-farm enterprise (both household and non-household) and getting in return wages according to terms of the daily wage or periodic work contract are treated as casual labourers.

United Nations’ definition

The “United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families”[1] defines migrant worker as follows:

“The term “migrant worker” refers to a person who is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national”.

The Convention has been ratified by Mexico, Brazil, and the Philippines (amongst many other nations that supply foreign labour) but it has not been ratified by the United States, Germany, and Japan (amongst other nations that receive foreign labour).

India

There has been a substantial flow of people from Bangladesh and Nepal to India over recent decades in search of better work opportunities. Researchers at the Overseas Development Institute found that these migrant workers are often subject to harassment, violence and discrimination during their journeys, at their destinations, and when they return

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home. Bangladeshi women appear to be particularly vulnerable. These findings highlight the need to promote migrants' rights with, amongst others, health staff, police and employers at destination.

Determinants of Migration

Now, we can discuss about the concept of migration. The problems of migrant workers have become very important in many developing countries of the world. The process of theorization of migration began in the 19th century. It has been discussed by many researchers, who have emphasized social and cultural, distant and economic factors as causes of migration.

Migration of labour started in India during the period of British colonial rule. It was aimed at meeting the requirements of capitalists' development both in India and abroad. The labour was moved from the hinterland to the sites of mining, plantation and manufactories. It was recruited from the rural areas and regulated in such a manner that women and children remained in the villages while males migrated to the modern sector. (Gill, 1998).

Generally, there are two basic factors of migration:

- i) Distance
- ii) Duration.

From the distance point of view, migration can be classified under four categories:

- i) Rural to Rural
- ii) Rural to Urban
- iii) Urban to Rural
- iv) Urban to Urban.

Besides, migration can be divided into following categories:

- i) Intra-district,
- ii) Inter-district
- iii) Intra-state
- iv) Inter-state
- v) National and International.

From the duration point of view migration can be studied under three categories:

- i) Casual-temporary
- ii) Periodic- seasonal
- iii) Permanent.

Todaro (1969], tried to explain migration in developing countries in terms of push and pull factors, respectively. Therefore, the motives of migration are classified as push factors (which emphasize on the situation at the origin, that is, place from which migration started) and pull factors (which emphasize on the situation at the destination). Unemployment, flood, earthquake, drought, (i.e., natural calamities) etc, are the push factors.

Pull factors that determine migration such as attraction of city life, for education, health, development of backward community, job opportunities and training facilities and so on. The push and pull factors of migration among tribal and lower income groups of population are categorized under the following heads: (i) Ecological factor (ii) Demographic factor (iii) Social and Cultural factors.

With the advent of industrial revolution in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, a new class of factory workers emerged in the world economy. Capital and labour were main factors of production in the production processes of Industrial Revolution. Consequently, producers or owners and workers emerged in the private economy. So far as welfare of the society is concerned, it was necessary to maintain labour standards for workers and provide them welfare facilities as per labour standards.

Therefore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) was established in 1919, under the Treaty of Versailles. After the Second World War period, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. It is the most important fundamental international instrument informing much about social, economic and political policies of many developed and developing countries in the world.

However, the human rights have been incorporated in the constitutions of many countries in the world.

According to ILO's principles and rights at work, core rights are important for working class in the world economy. India is a developing country. India adopted new economic policy in 1991, which is known as Liberalization, Privatization and Globalizations (LPG). New economic policy has changed the face of the country. Globalization brings in its wake restructuring of production processes, and employment relations. (Mishra, 2001) In the era of globalization, it is necessary to discuss relevant aspects of labour standards and labour rights, dimensions of decent work in respect of migrant workers in the developing countries like India.

Understanding Migration

This section brings out the basis of migration and the theory behind it. According to the National Sample Survey 62nd Round (NSS) among the total employed in the labour market self-employed (55.40 percent) are maximum in proportion followed by casual labour (29.80 percent). The National Sample Survey (NSS) defines a casual wage labourer as a person who is employed by others in farm or non-farm enterprises, both by household and non-household. In return, these workers receive wages according to the terms of the daily or periodic work contract (NSS 62nd Round Report, 2006).

It is important to note that casual labour in India has three major characteristics. First, they do not have a regular job contract. Second, their wages are lower than other categories of employment such as regular employment and self-employment. Third, they do not receive any social security benefit. Interestingly, migrants form a significant part of the casual labour market in India (Deshingkar and Farrington, 2006).

These migrants migrate to cities mostly in search of livelihood opportunities. The most important pattern of migration that prevails for a developing country like India is rural to urban migration. Mass migration to cities has become a part of the development process of regions, creating imbalance in development and growth among states and its inhabitants (Deshingkar, 2004).

Definition on Human Rights by NHRC INDIA

Section 2 (d) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 defines human rights as rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual, guaranteed by the Constitution, or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.

The international covenants included in the mandate are the international covenant on civil and political rights and the international covenant on economic and social and cultural rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 16, 1966 and such other covenant adopted by the UN General Assembly as the Central government may by notification specify.

The Rights of Migrant Workers

"Migrant worker" refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.

Human rights and migrant workers

The migrant worker is not a product of the twentieth century. Women and men have been leaving their homelands in search of work elsewhere ever since payment-in-return for labour was introduced. The difference today is that there are far more migrant workers than in any period of human history. Millions of people now earning their living-or looking for paid employment-come as strangers to the States where they reside. There is no continent, no region of the world, which does not have its contingent of migrant workers.

Why do they emigrate?

Poverty and the inability to earn enough or produce enough to support oneself or a family are major reasons behind the movement of work-seekers from one State to another. These are not only characteristics of migration from poor to rich States; poverty also fuels movements from one developing country to others where work prospects seem at a distance, at least-to be better.

There are other reasons why people go abroad in search of work. War, civil strife, insecurity or persecution arising from discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or political opinion all contribute to the flow of migrant workers.

Preparing to migrate

Some States encourage their citizens to go abroad to work; others actively recruit foreign workers. There are, in certain cases, bilateral agreements between States covering migrant labour.

Ideally, migrant workers-whether under contract or other formal arrangements, or simply setting off on their own initiative-should be given a basic understanding of the language, culture and legal, social and political structures of the States to which they are going. They should be informed in advance of the wages and working conditions and general living conditions they can expect to find on arrival.

Article 33 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families requires States parties to take the measures they deem appropriate to ensure that migrant workers and members of their families are informed, upon request, free of charge and, as far as possible, in a language they are able to understand, of their rights under the Convention and on all matters that will enable them to comply with administrative or other formalities in the State of employment.

Furthermore, article 37 of the Convention establishes the right of migrant workers and members of their families to be informed “before their departure, or at the latest at the time of their admission to the State of employment” of all conditions applicable to their admission, as well as of “the requirements they must satisfy in the State of employment and the authority to which they must address themselves for any modification of those conditions”.

Where official employment services assist in managing migration flows, there is a better chance that migrants will receive the minimum preparation

for life and work abroad than if recruitment and placement are left in the hands of private agents.

The fact remains that vast numbers of migrant workers are uninformed and ill-prepared to cope with life and work in a foreign country. Equally, most of them are unaware of the human rights and protection of fundamental freedoms which are guaranteed under international treaties and national laws.

Labour Laws applicable to migrant labour in India:

Following are the labour laws which are applicable to migrant labour in India.

Factories Act, 1948

The question as to whether Migrant rural labour can be registered as factory-worker under the Factories Act had been examined. It has been established that the process of manufacturing bricks comes within the definition of the manufacturing process as defined under the Factories Act and that the premises where the process is carried on, is covered by the expression “Premises” used in the definition of factory in the Act.

Payment of Gratuity Act

The provisions of this Act apply to all establishments, which are factories within the definition of the factory in the Factories Act. The Migrant rural labour comes within the purview of the Gratuity Act wherever the Migrant rural labour working in factories are located and are entitled to all benefits under that Act subject to the condition regarding completion of a specified period as stipulated in the Gratuity Act.

Payment of Bonus Act

The provisions of this Act apply to every factory within the definition of the Factories Act and every other establishment in which twenty or more persons are employed on any day during the accompanying year. Migrant rural labour workers working in such factories or establishments are entitled to the benefits under this Act.

Employment Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act

Migrant rural labour was added as a scheduled industry within the purview of the E.P.F and M.P. Act with effect from 27 November 1980. As per the provisions of this act, any factory that employs 20 persons and above from the Migrant rural labour, would, therefore, be covered as establishment to which the provisions of the Act and the schemes framed there-under would apply. Workmen who are employed in a Migrant rural labour establishment and render 60 days of work within a total employment period of 90 days would be enrolled as members of Provident Fund, family pension fund and employees deposit linked insurance fund.

Employees State Insurance Act

The provisions of this Act are extended area-wise and were applicable to 471 areas when the tripartite committee met.

Inter-State migrant workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act), 1979

The Act applies to every establishment in which 5 per cent or more interstate migrant workmen are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding 12 months. Since most of the brick kiln establishments employ inter-state migrant workers, i.e., workmen who are recruited through agents/sub-agents of the owners numbering 5 and above, they will come within the purview of the Act. The workmen so recruited will be entitled to all the welfare measures and statutory benefits, which are as follow:

- Journey allowance; payment of wages for the period of journey as if such period was on duty;
- Displacement allowance @50 per cent of the monthly wage payable or Rs75/-whichever is higher, (this is a onetime payment);
- Residential accommodation as may be prescribed, and

- Medical aid including hospitalization, as may be prescribed, reporting of cases of accident causing injury etc as have been provided under the Act.

Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 with Central Rules, 1971

The Migrant rural labour, which are getting certain jobs, processes or operations in the establishment performed by or through contractors who are employing 20 and above workmen, will come within the purview of the Act. The brick kiln owners will be required to obtain registration certificate U/S 7 of the Act. The contractors will be required to obtain license U/S 12 of this Act.

Classification of Labour Laws in India

Labour Laws may be classified under the following heads:

Laws related to Industrial Relations such as

- Trade Unions Act, 1926
- Industrial Employment Standing Order Act, 1946
- Industrial Disputes Act, 1947

Laws related to Wages such as

- Payment of Wages Act, 1936
- Minimum Wages Act, 1948
- Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.
- Working Journalists (Fixation of Rates of Wages Act, 1958

Laws related to Working Hours, Conditions of Service and Employment such as

- Factories Act, 1948.
- Plantation Labour Act, 1951.
- Mines Act, 1952.

- Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees' (Conditions of Service and Misc. Provisions) Act, 1955.
- Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
- Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961.
- Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
- Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970.
- Sales Promotion Employees Act, 1976.
- Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979.
- Dock Workers (Safety, Health & Welfare) Act, 1986.
- Building & Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.
- Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996
- Cine-Workers and Cinema Theatre Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1981
- Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, 1983
- Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1948
- Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) (Inapplicability to Major Ports) Act, 1997
- Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993
- Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946

- Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957
- Plantation Labour Act, 1951
- Private Security Agencies (Regulation) Act, 2005

Laws related to Equality and Empowerment of Women such as

- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

Laws related to deprived and Disadvantaged Sections of the Society such as

- Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976
- Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986
- Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933

Laws related to Social Security such as

- Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.
- Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- Employees' Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.
- Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.
- Employers' Liability Act, 1938
- Beedi Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1976
- Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976
- Cine workers Welfare Cess Act, 1981
- Cine Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1981
- Fatal Accidents Act, 1855
- Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore Mines and Chrome Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act, 1976

- Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore Mines and Chrome Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1976 Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972
- Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946
- Personal Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Act, 1963
- Personal Injuries (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1962
- Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008

Rights of Migrant Labour

The word 'decent' means accepted moral standards, decent work; it shows an acceptable quality of work. Let us say, workers are pleasant at work places and they are satisfied from any type of work due to decent conditions of life as well as decent working conditions of labour. It shows various types of freedoms and rights for men, women and children in order to maintain dignity of human life in the society, in other words, development of society, workers, as per labour standards.

Decent work refers to work wider than job or employment including wage employment, self-employment and home working and is based on the core enabling labour standards viz., freedom of association, collective bargaining, freedom from discrimination and child labour. Besides, the word decent too involves some notion of the normal standards of society, lack of decent work therefore has something common with concepts of deprivation or exclusion, but of which concerned with social and economic situations, which do not meet social standards.

Decent work is a broad concept which is related to overall development of the society and workers. Decent work is a way of capturing interrelated social and economic goals of development.

Development involves the removal of non-freedoms such as poverty, lack of access to public infrastructures or the denial of civil rights. Decent work brings together different types of freedoms such as labour rights, social security, employment opportunities etc.

Therefore, there are four dimensions of decent work,

- (i) Work and employment itself
- (ii) Rights at work
- (iii) Security
- (iv) Reprehensive at work dialogue.

The problem of seasonal-work in agro-based industries can be found in a large number of countries. Firstly, we have to define seasonal factory, seasonal factory is one which normally works for more than half the days of the year. The main feature of nearly all the seasonal factories is that the workers are still agriculturists and the great majority live in their village homes. The workers are generally quite unorganized and wages tend to be low. There are some of the important key questions; we need to seek answers like,

- (i) Who are the migrant workers?
- (ii) Why do they migrate from their native places?
- (iii) Where do they migrate?
- (iv) What is the status of migrant labour in respect of labour standards in India?
- (v) Do they know about their labour rights?

For the purpose of migration, some studies and reports have tried to seek answers of these questions, and they have discussed the problem of migrant workers in India. Agriculture is the mainstay of a large chunk of the population of India. The agriculture, on which the bulk of the rural population in our country has to depend for their livelihood, is itself largely dependent on the

precipitation and distribution of rainfall. Failure of rain and consequent failure of agriculture greatly reduces the purchasing power of this large segment of population.

Conclusion

Decent work is a broad concept which is related to social and economic goals of development. It brings together different types of freedoms. There are four types of dimensions of decent work, such as work and employment itself, rights at work, security, and representative at work dialogue. The International Labour Organization has played a significant role in promoting International Labour Standards. India has advocated the promotion of labour standards within the framework of the ILO Constitution. More than 90 percent of the total workforce is engaged in the unorganized or informal sector, including migrant labour and other workforce.

Migrant workers are those workers, who migrate from one area to another area within the state or country in order to get seasonal or temporary or part time work in different sectors. Migrant workers, who are not organized under any trade union and their labour standards are not protected by the government as well as trade unions, these migrant workers are generally illiterate, ignorant, and belong to backward community. They do not get minimum wages stipulated under the Minimum wages Act.

Today, the real issue is how to extend human rights to all segments of the labour market. There are many groups of workers in the unorganized sector or informal economy, like migrant workers in agriculture, building and road construction, brick kilns, sugar factories and others, for whom decent work is a very distant goal. There are no strong trade unions of migrant workers in the unorganized sector. The bargaining power of these migrant workers is thus weaker than workers in the organized sector.

After independence, India has adopted various labour policies in order to improve working conditions of workers in the unorganized sector.

There are also various labour laws for these workers. In fact, implementation of these laws is mostly ineffective. Therefore, migrant workers and workers in the unorganized sector are struggling for their labour rights and to implement the provisions of various labour laws as per International labour standards.

Therefore, the government of India should ratify all the relevant international covenants that respect the dignity of labour, especially important ILO Conventions No.87, the freedom of association and protection of the right to organize convention, and the ILO convention 98, the right to organize and collective bargaining convention. Workers, whether industrial workers or employed with the government should have an inalienable right to resort to strike. Uniform labour standards in the context of unorganized sector workers, like migrant workers, should be implemented in rural and urban areas of India. It is necessary to protect migrant and other workers in the unorganized sector by International labour standards

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Identity Politics and Social Change in Manipur

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[Identity politics in Northeast India has been in existence prior to independence from the time of British rule. In the long history of this region, the feelings of ethnic identity were materialized and minority-consciousness had emerged due to the domination by British administration. The native tribes were put in a system of inner-line permits controlling the movement of people, enslave them and imposing tax in their own land, therefore, in order to liberate themselves they began to retaliate the British draconian action. Thus began the chapter of identity politics in the history of Northeast India.]

Among the identity politics, the Nagas were the first to raise the banner of right and identity during the chieftainship of Late Heipou Jodonang and Late Rani Gaidinliu. Under their leadership, they fought against the British to retreat from imposing tax on the indigenous people and to isolate them from their civilization. The former was hanged to death in the year 1935 by the British government. After the death of their chief, the movement was led by Rani Gaidinliu and they continued their rebellion, Therefore, she too was then imprisoned by the British till the independence of India,

In the post-independence period, the people of Northeast region were still neglected by the government and they are also considered second-class citizens by the mainlanders. Thus the Nagas' identity politics was revived under the leadership of Angami Zapu Phizo under the banner of Naga National Council (NNC) in 1956 to fight for an independent Naga homeland. They were the first group, which started arms training movement; later insurgencies had spread across the region and motivated other minor and major ethnic groups in the region to come out with their demands.

A number of ethnic groups are also crying for special rights and the protection of their distinct identity.

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These identity conflicts grew sturdier and they started to dominate and set agendas in few respective geographical areas. Some groups call for a separate state, others for regional autonomy while some extreme groups demand complete independence, thus the mushrooming of identity politics continues.

Manipur and Nagaland are having the highest number of armed groups and also were the worst affected states too. As a result not only they disturbed the civil society but also generated a vicious Social Change in the society. Here is an account of the various social changes that have emerged as a result of the identity politics with special reference to Manipur.

Self-Styled Regime

The operation of insurgency in the state has reduced the power of the bureaucratic administration and lessened the effectiveness of the democratic ruling government. The insurgents are more influential in the civil society because of their violent nature. In many semi-urban and rural areas, they are able to control the civil society to live within their self-styled regime. They have their own regulation to impose toward the civil society. They have taken the law in to their hand by dispensing instant justice and punishment.

They are able to capture the government development projects and drag them to their own desired location. Under such circumstances, the law enforcing agency and the security forces, the judiciary and the democratic government are not able to function systematically. For example the civil society is not bothered to clear the arrears which are due to them in the government office but they are prone to pay off those illegal taxes collected against them by the underground organizations, yet reluctantly to free themselves from the threat of the underworld.

AFSPA and Arms-Oriented Society

The mushrooming of the insurgency led to the imposition of the 'Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) 1958 in Manipur in the year 1980 (Malem Ningthouja, 2010). It was imposed in order to tackle the threat of insurgency and protect the civil society and to maintain law and order but it failed to serve its intended purpose. Instead the Act has become a threat to the people. These impositions only increase the insecurity of public owing to the misuse of power.

Innocent people have to suffer and even they have lost their lives because this Act empowered the armed forces to operate on anyone whom they suspected to be a militant. The Act is also responsible for mushrooming of new insurgent groups among the various ethnic groups as they long for vengeance for their brethren who lost their lives under these conflicting situations. It also provokes the civilians and forces them to believe in violence to gain justice. The common men – young and old – are exposed to armed violence the moment they begin to gain consciousness of their environment

Ethnic Disharmony

The existing 'Identity politics' influences many minor ethnic groups to become aggressive and conscious toward the cause of their identity. It injects hatred

and disintegrates the people of various ethnic groups. This politics decreases the harmony and increases the ethnic clash and violence. Under the prevailing circumstances, it is difficult to stop this ethnic violence completely in the state. It can erupt at anytime and anywhere without any warning.

In the recent past the state has witnessed numerous such incidents of violence among the various ethnic groups, like the Kuki and Naga clash in 1992, Meitei and Muslim ethnic violence in 1993 and often there erupts ethnic violence between Nagas and Meiteis (Maring, D.M. 2008).

Socio-Political Unrest

Socio-political unrest is a part and parcel of life in Manipur. The state is always preoccupied with some activities such as economic blockades, strikes, agitations, protests or boycott of government development activities. The state holds the record for political unrest in the country (Global Voices, 2010). Disturbances such as closing of educational institutions, shutting down of Government administration and business set-ups, destruction of public properties such as bridge and power transformer, blocking of highway and its transport facilities and restricting people's activities, armed encounters between security forces and insurgents and many other similar actions are a recurring phenomenon.

Such unrest has paralyzed the civil society in various dimensions. These incidents of unrest are growing stronger day by day; therefore, returning to normalcy will involve a great effort from the government.

Young People's Indifference to Mainstreaming

In the state, young people have reportedly become accustomed to detest and; therefore, it has become a way of life to hate and it seems that they never believe in love and goodness. Hence, there is no fraternity among the young people today. They are deviating from main stream under the influence of the insurgency.

Some young people are lured to believe that fighting for their Land and Identity is a noble cause. They are led to enjoy being engaged in some conflict all the time. Therefore, youngsters begin to feel that engaging in violence is worthy and noble way of life. The influence was so strong that many innocent youth dropped out from their studies and started joining the armed factions of the insurgents. Taking advantage of their innocence and ignorance, the insurgency organizations recruit them with the idea of catching them young.

Decline of Virtues

People from Manipur or as a whole from the Northeast are always known for their hospitality courtesy and also for their sincerity. But this virtue of rich social human capital is gradually declining as this identity crisis becomes more studier. This virtue has been replaced by hatred and grudges. In the past people used to care for the prosperity of their neighboring community but today they are spurred with the desire to dominate the same. Today's youngsters are more violent and they never live in tune with the society nor do they live in spiritualism anymore. The human value, which was gifted to this community and which existed for generations, has slowly dissolved in the heat of identity politics.

Hegemony of Crime

Crime is a usual happening everywhere but when it occurs there is a law and order to tackle but the experience is different in Manipur. The insensitiveness toward the crime is frequently seen in the state and the people are led to feel that crime is also a part of daily life. Especially, when the crime is committed by insurgents or Indian army, they consider it not fit for trial because they are under the protection of their government. The reason is that there will be more humiliation and disappointment if they pursue the case hence they let the case be closed without trail.

It is certain that if the accused are insurgents, they will go underground and if it is an Indian army or government security forces they will be protected by AFSPA. Therefore, pursuing a case is regarded as a waste of time and resources. It is also noticed that this insensitiveness of the civil society encourages the insurgents to perpetrate more violence. It also provokes the common man to engage in crime by misusing armed forces' identity

Culture of Violence

The violence caused by insurgency and other forces is not new in Manipur. So the civil society has begun to accept it as a part of daily culture. The culture of violence has gained so much salience in the state that society has begun to believe that violence is a rightful mechanism and a means to an end. They depend on the act of violence as a strategy to achieve their demands – whether to show their anger or to prove their solidarity.

They also depend on violence to draw attention from the government in time of their suffering. Therefore, the state has experienced many incidents of mob violence, ethnic clashes and fake encounters on every socio-political issue. The general public has the perception that violence is the only way to come out of the clutches of domination or to get recognized their identity or to attain the supremacy.

Spring of Northeast Migration

Migrations were very few in number in the earlier times and that too was only of government servants or regiments which were posted outside the home state and children from well off family for their higher education outside; but today the disturbances caused by the identity politics activity and security forces have left no option for the people other than to migrate and escape from such crisis. One can also observe the change in the trend of migration too. Migration from North East India is at the peak now. According to the study conducted by North East Support Centre & Helpline New Delhi, in 2011

the number of Northeast migrants reached 4,14,000 approximately and it has increased by 12 times when compared to 2005 (Madhu Chandra, 2011).

Conclusion

Identity politics in Manipur has long historical evidence dating back to British India era and it still exists to the present day. As the insurgents continue to operate in the state, they continue to oppress the civil society. There is an undying political unrest which makes the state always vulnerable and in the thick of crisis all the time. The disturbances paralyze the civil society. Besides, there are many social changes taking place in the society which are vicious in nature.

If all this identity politics in the state is drawn into negotiations, Manipur and the whole Northeast region would evolve into a greater civilization with its beautiful people who are known for possessing rich human virtues. It is the need of the time to restore that change and to bring back peace and harmony in the state. It is also the need of the hour that the government and other UN bodies brook no delay in establishing a sustainable mechanism that could provide equal power relationship and justice to every ethnic group and bring back the state to normalcy so that its inhabitants can exhibit their civilization from within.

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CSR & Financial Inclusion in Rural Areas

S. Yasotha Margaret * & A. Priyanka**

[Financial inclusion in simple sense is incorporating more and more people within the financial sector periphery from all sections of the society in the form of access to financial services like saving accounts, access to formal credit, making people financially literate and so on. Financial inclusion becomes more relevant for the rural economy because of its population size, market potential and changing income levels and consumption pattern.]

With the liberalization of markets, the increased competition may result in less attention to marginal market segments. Furthermore, leveling the regulation of different banking/financial institutions generally resulted in the disappearance of types of financial institutions which traditionally served low-income people. These two factors accentuate the difficulties to access to financial services. This main evolution can meet other currents, depending on the financial service considered and the maturity (level of use of financial services within the consumer's habits) and structure of the market (with or without sub-prime or illegal or saving/mutual/cooperative actors, Postal bank).

Financial inclusion is about:-

- Access (current bank account / credit / saving / insurance)
- Use (current bank account / credit / saving / insurance), often related to the design/adequacy of the product to the need

The above mentioned problems (often interrelated) may be a good target for CSR initiatives. Indeed, investing these fields may bring benefits at different levels: 1) image 2) staff motivation 3) New market 4) New products. However, as the country reports

illustrate, a diversity of initiatives are taken by financial institutions to combat financial exclusion.

Objectives

1. To study the need of financial inclusion for rural India
2. To discuss about recent initiatives to promote financial inclusion
3. To analyze the measures and new financial inclusion schemes in India

Review of Literature

Dr Raghuram Rajan, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, has pointed out at the NASSCOM (The National Association of Software and Services Companies) India Leadership Forum, Mumbai, on 12 February 2014: 'Financial inclusion is about (a) the broadening of financial services to those people who do not have access to financial services sector; (b) the deepening of financial services for people who have minimal financial services; and (c) greater financial literacy and consumer protection so that those who are offered the products can make appropriate choices.

Dr.A.P.J Kalam said that corporate and industrial houses could make an important contribution by adopting the schools, particularly in rural areas in their region, and providing infrastructure for the schools in the form of clean drinking water, toilet

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and transportation facilities, building sport complexes and providing computing facilities.

He further added: “This type of support to government and private schools will improve the quality of education to the children in the rural and semi-urban areas, leading to development of enlightened citizens. The support for developing quality human resource with embedded value system is an important social responsibility mission since it creates the human asset for the nation.”

A World Bank working paper, published in 2012, indicated that 65% of adults in India had no access to a Bank account. For a country with a population of over 1.23 billion, in the absence of access to credit when needed, a large segment of Indian population lives in a state of depravity, often falling prey to local money lenders who, through fraudulent means, trap them into a vicious cycle of debt.

Need of Financial Inclusion for Rural India

Rural India accounts for about 68 per cent of country’s population and three fourth of the population depends upon agriculture. Though the share of agriculture in GDP has declined from 29.34 per cent in 1991 to 13.72 per cent in 2012, 58 per cent of employment opportunities lie in rural sector. The growth rate in agriculture sector has been very low i.e. only 2.8 per cent during 1991 to 2012 which is relatively de-motivating as compared to urban sector. Rural India constitutes about 6.4 lakh villages, but 24,000 villages have bank branches with full-fledged services.

The increasing usage of mobile phone by rural population has emerged as one of the potential source of financial inclusion. According to TRAI (2014), 74 percent households possess a mobile phone, and out of the total subscription base of 933 million, about 40.5 percent comes from rural areas.

Increasing literacy rates in rural areas, demand of housing, automobiles, electronic product and

educational loans are other opportunities to be tabbed by retail banks, hence initiating the financial inclusion drives with more zeal.

Recent initiatives to promote financial inclusion

With the launch of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dan Yojana in August 2014, India has ushered into a new regime of financial inclusion. Jan Dan Yojana, announced by prime minister Narendra Modi on August 15 and launched on August 28, envisages access to banking service to all un-banked individuals India. Under PMJDY, 75 million people would be provided with a bank account and an overdraft facility of Rs 5,000 each. Further, every account holder will be provided debit card Rupay and Rs. 1 lakh accident insurance cover. Those opening an account before January 26, 2015, will also be entitled to avail of a life insurance cover of Rs 30,000.

The scheme would also facilitate the use of mobile banking among poor through the National Unified USSD Platform (NUUP). The NUUP would allow customers to access banking services using a single number across all banks, irrespective of the telecom provider or mobile handset being used (National Payment Corporation of India, 2014).

Initially, banks were given a target to open 75 million accounts by the middle of August 2015. After banks had opened about 15 million accounts by this August, the date was forwarded to January 26, 2015.

New financial inclusion schemes in India

- The Pradhan Mantra Jeevan Jyot Bima Yojana.
- Pradhan Mantra Suraksha Bima Yojana.
- Atal Pension Yojana.

The pension scheme would allow subscribers of age 18 to 40. Under this scheme, subscriber will get guaranteed minimum pension on attaining the age

of 60. The pension could be Rs 1000, Rs 2000, Rs 3000, Rs 4000, or Rs 5000 per month, depending on the size of contribution.

Other Schemes Like

1. National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP):

The NCIP launched in 2013 has unit area of insurance reduced to village/village panchayat level. It helps farmers to compensate losses in crop yield, maintain credit flow and adopt latest agricultural technology.

2. Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme.

3. Coconut Palm Insurance Scheme.

Measures

Various measures have been undertaken by the Reserve Bank of India and Government of India from time to time to increase the level of financial inclusion. Nationalization of banks in 1969, priority sector lending, establishment of regional rural banks (RRBs) in 1975, establishment of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development in 1982, adoption of service area approach in 1989, initiation of self- help group-bank linkage program in 1990, Kisan credit card scheme, Jan Dan Yojana in 2014 are some of the noteworthy measures. Opening for No-frill accounts, usage for regional language, easier account opening formalities, simplified KYC norms, usage of information technology like smart cards, mobile banking, ATM card, launching of micro Units Development Refinance Agency (MUDRA) Bank etc. and adoption of measures for making people financially literate has accentuated financial inclusion procedure.

Conclusion

However, there is lot to achieve in terms of contribution towards financial inclusion by foreign and private banks as compared to public sector

bank's contribution. Indian Banking as a whole as a part of corporate social responsibility should take up issue of opening No Frill Accounts seriously and make deliberate efforts to achieve financial inclusion. It not only will help Indian society to achieve social inclusion but also help monetization of Indian economy and taking bank to bank. Also RBI has taken various measures to implement financial inclusion more effectively and has recommended it seriously to the private and foreign banks in India.

A large section of the population lacks access to basic financial services in order to address its need for financial product through informal means which are costly and unsecure. Financial inclusion aims to reduce such risks, and provide other options. Over the years the various policies had failed to increase the presence of banks in remote rural areas. PMJDY will cover these areas and bring large sections of the population, especially in the rural areas, in the mainstream of economic growth. Many banks have already embraced corporate social responsibility, make generous donations and send volunteers to local community organisations. The next step is for corporate social responsibility to have an impact on the way banks do business. Finally, the financial sector should adopt in this field voluntary charters and codes of practice

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Bertrand Russell's Concept of Practical Morality

Nijara Saikia*

[Ethics is conceived as dealing with human conduct, and as deciding what is virtuous and what vicious among the kinds of conduct between which, in practice, people are called upon to choose. The most fundamental notions in ethics are the notions of intrinsic good and evil. A moral act is virtuous and deserves praise; an immoral act is sinful and deserves blame. Ethics can help one to foresee the distinction between good and evil and thereby keeps the society in peace and harmony. Philosophy in part deals with ethics, but to know how to live coherently, how to live together in peace and harmony is the basic ethics of all ethics. Ethics teaches us how to maintain a harmonious relation with fellow beings, animate as well as inanimate; how to flourish once life with the flourishing of others.]

But, the present century has seen dramatic changes in moral attitudes. Some people regard morality as a system of nasty puritanical prohibitions, mainly designed to stop people having fun. Traditional moralists claim to be the defenders of morality in general, but they are really defending a particular moral code. Some people think that ethics is incapable to the real world because they regard it as a system of short and simple rules like 'do not kill', 'do not steal', and 'do not lie'.

They believe that ethics is not suited to life's complexities. Some theists say that ethics cannot do without religion because the very meaning of 'good' is nothing other than 'what god approves'. In Western philosophy, there have been a number of philosophers who demonstrated a special talent for making ethical questions cloudy. Immanuel Kant, a most pious Christian, scorned anything that smacked of a self-interested motive for obeying the moral law. Kant said, we must obey, for its own sake. Recently Bertrand Russell, the intellectual icon said that, it is not the business of ethics to arrive at actual rules of conduct, such as: 'Thou shall not steal'. Ethics is expected to provide a basis from which such rules can be deduced.

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Objective of the study

1. The main objective of the proposed study is to study Russell's concept of practical morality.
2. To analyze the defect of Christian ethics.
3. To focus on sexual morality and family life.

Russell's concept of Practical morality

Bertrand Russell was without question one of the most productive and brilliant thinkers of the twentieth century. Russell gained worldwide recognition as a bold man and a wise thinker. The most important concept of Russell's philosophy is practical morality. Russell was much more a moralist than a moral philosopher. Ethics or moral science is perhaps more commonly conceived as being concerned with the questions 'What sort of actions ought men to perform?' and 'What sort of actions ought men to avoid?' Ethics deals with human behavior and conduct. We may take ethics to consist of general principles which help to determine rules of conduct.

The most fundamental notions in ethics are the notions of moral and immoral. But Russell's views on ethics or moral science are somewhat different. Primarily, we call something 'good' when we desire it and 'bad when we have an aversion from it. But according to Russell our use of words is more

constant than our desires, and therefore we shall continue to call a thing good even at moments when we do not actually desire it.

It is evident that there can be more good in a world where the desires of different individuals harmonise than in one where they conflict. So, from Russell's point of view, the supreme moral rule should be: Act so as to produce harmonious rather than discordant desires. This rule will apply wherever a man's influence extends: within himself, in his family, his city, his country, even the world as a whole, if he is able to influence it.

Russell was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in 1950. In his famous work *Marriage and Morals*, he wrote much on practical moral question. *Marriage and Morals* deals with larger and more pressing questions. It focuses upon sex and family life. In Russell's view, sexual morality has two principal sources: man's desire to be sure that they are truly the fathers of the children to whom their women give birth, and the religion inspired belief that Sex is sinful.

Russell was always prepared to take instruction from the science of his day, in this instance looking to biology for an explanation of the origins of his day. Russell argues that sexual morality in early times had the biological purpose of securing the protection of two parents for each child; a motive which Russell is keen to agree is a good one. But so far personal sexual morality is concerned; the modern tendency to greater freedom of opinion and action is a good thing. Freer opinions result from a loosening of the grip of traditional morality, especially religious morality, and freer action is made possible by improvements in contraception, which put women on a par with men in having control over their sexual lives.

In Russell's opinion the doctrine that sex is sinful has done untold harm. The harm begins in childhood and continues into adulthood in the form of inhibitions and the stresses they cause. By repressing sexual impulses, conventional morality subverts other kinds of friendly feeling also, making

people less generous and kindly, and more prone to self-assertion and cruelty. So, sex of course must be governed by an ethic; but it should not be based on ancient prohibitions propounded by uneducated people in a society.

Sex morality has to be derived from certain general principles. The first principle is that there should be as much as possible of that deep, serious love between man and woman who embraces the whole personality of both and leads to a fusion by which each is enriched and enhanced. The second thing of importance is that there should be adequate care of children, physical and psychological. These two principles imply certain important adjustments to the conventional moral code. So, Russell argues that a good life cannot be based on anxieties and prohibitions.

In sexual matters, irrational prohibitions and dishonesty were exceedingly harmful. In *Marriage and Morals* he wrote: "the morality which I should advocate does not consist simply of saying to grown-up people or to adolescents: 'follow your impulses and do as you like.' There has to be consistency in life; there has to be continuous effort directed to ends that are not immediately beneficial and not at every moment attractive; there has to be consideration for others; and there should be certain standards of rectitude. . . . But this does not mean that we should be dominated by fears which modern discoveries have made irrational." 1 (Russell, *Marriage and Morals*, p. 311)

Russell did not agree with Christian ethics; because the Christian ethics inevitably, through the emphasis laid upon sexual virtue, did a great deal to degrade the position of woman. The writing of the fathers are full of invectives against woman, "woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance, on account of the curses she has brought upon the world. She should be ashamed of her dress, for it is the memorial of her fall.

She should be especially ashamed of her beauty, for it is the most potent instrument of the demon.

Physical beauty was indeed perpetually the theme of ecclesiastical denunciations, though one singular exception seems to have been made; for it has been observed that in the Middle Ages the personal beauty of bishops was continually noticed upon their tombs. Women were even forbidden by a provincial council, in the sixth century, on account of their impurity, to receive the Eucharist into their naked hands. Their essentially subordinate position was continually maintained” 2 (Russell, *Marriage and Morals*, p. 38).

The laws of property and inheritance were altered in the same sense against women, and it was only through the freethinkers of the French Revolution that daughters recovered their rights of inheritance.

Conclusion

The present moment is the most important and most crucial that has ever confronted mankind. Upon our collective wisdom during the last twenty years depends the question whether mankind shall be plunged into unparalleled disaster, or shall achieve a new level of happiness, security, well-being and intelligence. There is grave reason for fear, but there is enough possibility of a good solution to make hope not irrational. And it is on this hope that we must act.

Our scientific skill will make it possible to abolish poverty throughout the world without necessitating more than four or five hours a day of productive labors. Disease, which has been very rapidly reduced during the last hundred years, will be reduced further. All this is easily within the bounds of technical possibility. It requires for its realization only one thing: that the men who hold power, and the populations that support them, should think it more important to keep themselves alive than to cause the death of their enemies.

The world at the present day stands in need of two kinds of things: on the one hand, organization - political organization for the elimination of wars, economic organization to enable men to work productively, educational organization to generate a sane internationalism; on the other hand it needs

certain moral qualities which have been advocated by moralists for many ages, but hitherto with little success.

The qualities most needed are charity and tolerance, not some form of fanatical faith such as is offered to us by the various rampant ‘isms’. So, in conclusion it can be said that there will have to be a realization at once intellectual and moral that we are all one family, and that the happiness of no one branch of this family can be built securely upon the ruin of another.

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Legislators' Perceptions about Democracy in India

Part - II

Dr. Sunita Rani*

In the words of Garner 'Popular governments resting as they do on the consent of the governed and upon the principal of equality, are also likely to be more immune from revolutionary disturbances than those in which the people have no right of participation'.

Table-1 brings out the perception of legislators of the four assemblies under study on the democratic system of government. Most of the legislators saw merit in the fact that this form of government is based on the will of people. 21.5 percent legislators in all the four respective assemblies voiced this opinion. 19.1 percent legislators on the other hand held that democracies afforded less possibility of revolution and therefore were comparatively more stable.

16.6 percent believed that the greatest merit in democracies was that they bring efficiency in the administration. 15.6 percent said that democratic governments make greater room and acceptance for public criticism while 13.7 percent said that they facilitate socio-economic and political reforms. Only 13.2 percent associated democracy with the

founding principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Demerits of Democracy

As for the weaknesses of democratic system of government 27.9 percent agreed with the option that democratic governments were established by the nationalist elite even when posing to be popular and moreover they proved to be very expensive forms of governance. 26.2 percent respondents opined that the provisions like that of Political Emergency negated the popularity of elected governments.

The whole notion of popular representation collapsed under such provisions. 24.5 percent respondents on the other hand saw a major demerit in the fact that gradually the leadership in most of the democracies tends to become career oriented with lesser zeal for reform, progress and selfless social service. 21.1 percent respondents in all the four assemblies felt that in the attempt to ensure universal consensus, democracies tend to focus more on quantity than quality.

Table-2

Legislators Perception About the Model of Political System

| Response | 1997(34)* | 2002(34) | 2007(34) | 2012(34) | Total (136) |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| India Is Truly Democratic | 41.1 (14) | 29.4 (10) | 47 (16) | 32.3 (11) | 37.5 (51) |
| India is not Truly Democratic | 50 (17) | 58.8 (20) | 44.1 (15) | 38.2 (13) | 47.7 (65) |
| It is Partially Democratic | 8.8 (3) | 11.7 (4) | 8.8 (3) | 29.4 (10) | 14.7 (20) |

Source: Personal Interview.

Note: Figures in bracket denote the real number of

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respondents.

It is clear from Table-2 that in the legislators' perception democracy in India cannot be unconditionally glorified as only 37.5 percent of all

the legislators and 41.1 percent, 29.4 percent, 47 percent and 32.3 percent in the four respective assemblies considered India to be a truly democratic country. A larger percentage i.e. 47.7 percent from the total and 50 percent, 58.8 percent, 44.1 percent and 38.2 percent consisted of those who believed that it was not truly democratic. Only 14.7 percent from the total number and 8.8 percent, 11.7 percent, 8.8 percent and 29.4 percent respondents from the four respective assemblies expressed concurrence with the statement that India was only partially democratic.

These legislators were of the opinion that defects were liable to appear in any working model of democracy. It is true that democracies have often been at the receiving end of harsh criticism. French writer Faquet has described democracy as the cult of incompetence. It is a government by amateurs or those who are hopelessly immature.

Both Plato and Aristotle condemned democracy as an abnormal form of government. The table given above is another evidence of the fact that the deficiencies of democracies are not easily ignored and people are generally unsparing in their assessment of democracies. Yet, one has to concede the fact that in a system of government that aims to give representation to the maximum number of people perfection is the last thing to be expected. It is worth mentioning that legislators offered suggestions for improvement of the function of Indian democracy liberally along with their responses.

Suggestions for Improvement in Democracy

Democracy is a challenging form of government for the assumptions on which it rests are difficult to fulfill.

Well known French philosopher, Rousseau, affirmed that if the terms of democratic governance are taken in a strict sense “there never has been a real democracy”. In a democracy, people must have a high sense of citizenship and a high level of political consciousness.

For the successful functioning of democracy there must be provision of adequate opportunities for the individual to develop his personality to its full potential. Moreover, to equip the citizen for the performance of his civil duties, education is necessary. Education, indeed, is the backbone of democracy. The active and intelligent participation of citizens in public affairs can be assured if all of them are adequately educated.

Conditions for the emergence of good leadership must also exist in a democracy. Responsible and ideal leadership can emerge only if the citizens have adequate awareness of public matters. A good democracy promotes cordial relations between the majority and the minority. If the people of a country are steeped in ignorance they can never be architects of a good democracy. Apart from this a free press is said to be ‘soul of democracy’. It means that there should be a free and independent press which should serve as a popular means of educating and shaping public opinion.

The combination of popular rule with skilled administration is also an important condition for democracy. A properly designed and well operated administrative system can contribute in harmonizing popular control with “government by the specialists”. The future of democracy appears, by all calculations, to be bright, and democracy as an ideal is bound to inspire as long as man will have faith in man.

Table-3*

Suggestions for Improvement in Democracy

| Suggestions | 1997(34)* | 2002(34) | 2007(34) | 2012(34) | Total(136) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| No. of Response | (51) | (40) | (45) | (47) | (183) |
| Social Equality Free and Honest Press | 15.6 (8) | 22.5 (9) | 17.7 (8) | 34.0 (16) | 22.4 (41) |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Decentralization of Powers and Independent Judiciary | 31.3 (16) | 37.5 (15) | 35.3 (16) | 17.0 (8) | 30 (55) |
| Able Leadership and Honest and Efficient Bureaucracy | 15.6 (8) | 22.5 (9) | 17.7 (8) | 31.9 (15) | 21.8 (40) |
| Rule of Law, Civil Liberties, and Proper Representation to Minorities | 37.2 (19) | 17.5 (7) | 28.8 (13) | 17.0 (8) | 25.6 (47) |

Source: Personal Interview.

*Multiple Response Table.

Social Equality, Free and Honest Press

Social equality is essential for the success of democracy. Discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, sex, religion has no place in an ideal democracy. Prof. Hearnshaw has rightly said, "Democracy demands elimination both, of privileged nobility or a benefitted clergy on the one side and of an oppressed industrial proletariat or an enslaved peasantry on the other."

Press performs the function of the watchdog of democracy because press is the forum where criticism of wrong policies of government takes place. This helps in making the government more accountable. Apart from this, the press heeds the problems of the people and gives voice to them.

However, press has to be honest and free from political and economic pressures in order to discharge its duties impartially and efficiently. It is the duty of the press to evaluate the national and international problems properly and to sensitize the masses about political and social realities. Thus, social equality and free and honest press were the two essential components of a democracy the importance of which was emphasized by several legislators for making our democracy better. 22.4 percent of all the legislators and 15.6 percent, 22.5 percent, 17.7 percent and 34 percent legislators in all the four assemblies asserted that greater freedom in the functioning of the press and in the area of social justice can help in making our democracy

better.

Decentralization of Powers and Independent and Impartial Judiciary

It is an acknowledged fact that for the success of democracy, political power needs to be decentralized and distributed at village, city, province and national levels. This means that administration should be run from different centers and maximum number of people should be associated in administration. Centralization of power is often tantamount to dictatorship. For the protection of liberties and rights in democracy, independent judiciary is also essential.

Judiciary must be independent from the control of the executive and legislature and there should be proper provision of its independence in the constitution, so that it can perform its functions impartially and independently. Table-3 reveals that 30 percent of all the legislators and 31.3 percent, 37.5 percent, 35.3 percent and 17 percent respondents from the four assemblies respectively considered decentralization of powers and independent and impartial judiciary essential for the improvement in the functioning of the Indian democracy.

Able Leadership and Honest and Efficient Bureaucracy

Honest, unselfish and intelligent leaders are also necessary for the success of democracy because these leaders are to lead the country. They have to become ideals for generations to come. Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri,

Lincoln, Churchill, Nelson Mandela etc. are the most famous examples of such leaders. Similarly, bureaucratic system is central to the smooth functioning of a democracy. As administrators, bureaucrats are responsible for the proper execution of services and programmes of the government.

Thus, able leadership and honest and efficient bureaucracy was considered to be of the utmost importance by 21.8 percent of all the legislators whereas 15.6 percent, 22.5 percent, 17.7 percent, 31.9 percent respondents from the four respective assemblies believed that able leadership and efficient bureaucracy were most important for improvement in the functioning of democracy.

Rule of Law, Civil Liberties, and Proper Representation to Minorities

For the success of democracy, it is necessary that proper provisions are made in the constitution for the protection of civil liberties such as personal freedom, freedom of movement, religious freedom, freedom of thought and expression, freedom to form political parties etc.,. There should also be rule of law instead of rule of man. 25.6 percent of all the legislators and 37.2 percent, 17.5 percent, 28.8 percent, 17 percent respondents in the four respective assemblies opted for rule of law, civil liberties and proper representation to minorities as the most important attributes of a true democracy.

The perception of legislators about the success of democratic system shows a lot of diversity. While there is very little agreement about the success of democracy, the legislators have a keen consciousness of the nature of democracy. Legislators betray very different opinions about the factors such as the principles that govern the Indian democracy as well as the institutions that have relevance to it. But their responses prove that as far as these core issues are concerned there is a lot of diversity of opinion.

The legislators also expressed dissatisfaction with level of democracy in India. The figures related to

their perception of democratic functioning of political system and society in India clearly proves this. In 1997 nearly 40 percent felt that India is truly democratic and close to 9 percent said that is only partially democratic, in 2012 the figures change 32.3 percent for the first and 29.4 percent for the second.

When asked about the ways of improving Indian democracy the leadership shows increasing faith in an honest press and in honest and able leadership and bureaucracy. From nearly 15 percent legislators who reposed faith in these in 1997 the figure rose to above 30 percent in 2012.

Conclusion

On the basis of the data given above, it can be concluded that ineffectiveness of governance and deficiencies of our political system were cited as main factors responsible for widespread corruption. Respondents expressed a feeling that lack of knowledge was the second most important factor whereas unemployment among the educated was the third most important factor responsible for corruption. Lust for money and lack of patience in public were the other major causes of corruption in our country as well as Punjab.

The opinions of the legislators on the possible solutions for removing corruption were also sought. The options for the removal of corruption offered to them were enactment of strict laws, development of administrative reforms and availability of employment opportunities through economic reforms, greater transparency etc.

References

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